

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN she returned to the house, Miss Garth made no attempt to conceal her unfavourable opinion of the stranger in black. His object was, no doubt, to obtain pecuniary assistance from Mrs. Vanstone. What the nature of his claim on her might be, seemed less intelligible—unless it was the claim of a poor relation. Had Mrs. Vanstone ever mentioned, in the presence of her daughters, the name of Captain Wragge? Neither of them recollected to have heard it before. Had Mrs. Vanstone ever referred to any poor relations who were dependent on her? On the contrary, she had mentioned of late years that she doubted having any relations at all who were still living. And yet, Captain Wragge had plainly declared that the name on his card would recollect "a family matter" to Mrs. Vanstone's memory. What did it mean? A false statement, on the stranger's part, without any intelligible reason for making it? Or a second mystery, following close on the heels of the mysterious journey to London?

All the probabilities seemed to point to some hidden connexion between the "family affairs" which had taken Mr. and Mrs. Vanstone so suddenly from home, and the "family matter" associated with the name of Captain Wragge. Miss Garth's doubts of the day before thronged back on her mind, as she sealed her letter to Mrs. Vanstone, with the captain's card added by way of enclosure.

By return of post the answer arrived.

Always the earliest riser among the ladies of the house, Miss Garth was alone in the breakfast-room when the letter was brought in. Her first glance at its contents convinced her of the necessity of reading it carefully through in retirement, before any embarrassing questions could be put to her. Leaving a message with the servant requesting Norah to make the tea that morning, she went up-stairs at once to the solitude and security of her own room.

Mrs. Vanstone's letter extended to some length. The first part of it referred to Captain Wragge, and entered unreservedly into all necessary explanations relating to the man himself, and to the motive which had brought him to Combe-Raven.

It appeared from Mrs. Vanstone's statement that her mother had been twice married. Her mother's first husband had been a certain Doctor Wragge—a widower with young children; and one of those children was now the unmilitary-looking captain, whose address was "Post-office, Bristol." Mrs. Wragge had left no family by her first husband; and had afterwards married Mrs. Vanstone's father. Of that second marriage Mrs. Vanstone herself was the only issue. She had lost both her parents while she was still a young woman; and, in course of years, her mother's family connexions (who were then her nearest surviving relatives) had been one after another removed by death. She was left, at the present writing, without a relation in the world—excepting, perhaps, certain cousins whom she had never seen, and of whose existence even, at the present moment, she possessed no positive knowledge.

Under these circumstances, what family claim had Captain Wragge on Mrs. Vanstone?

None whatever. As the son of her mother's first husband, by that husband's first wife, not even the widest stretch of courtesy could have included him at any time in the list of Mrs. Vanstone's most distant relations. Well knowing this (the letter proceeded to say), he had nevertheless persisted in forcing himself upon her as a species of family connexion; and she had weakly sanctioned the intrusion, solely from the dread that he would otherwise introduce himself to Mr. Vanstone's notice, and take unblushing advantage of Mr. Vanstone's generosity. Shrinking, naturally, from allowing her husband to be annoyed, and probably cheated as well, by any person who claimed, however preposterously, a family connexion with herself, it had been her practice, for many years past, to assist the captain from her own purse, on the condition that he should never come near the house, and that he should not presume to make any application whatever to Mr. Vanstone.

Readily admitting the imprudence of this course, Mrs. Vanstone further explained that she had perhaps been the more inclined to adopt it, through having been always accustomed, in her early days, to see the captain living now upon one member, and now upon another, of her mother's family. Possessed of abilities which might have raised him to distinction, in almost any career that he could have chosen, he had nevertheless, from his youth upwards, been a

disgrace to all his relatives. He had been expelled the militia regiment in which he once held a commission. He had tried one employment after another, and had discreditably failed in all. He had lived on his wits in the lowest and basest meaning of the phrase. He had married a poor ignorant woman, who had served as a waitress at some low eating-house, who had unexpectedly come into a little money, and whose small inheritance he had mercilessly squandered to the last farthing. In plain terms, he was an incorrigible scoundrel; and he had now added one more to the list of his many misdemeanours, by impudently breaking the conditions on which Mrs. Vanstone had hitherto assisted him. She had written at once to the address indicated on his card, in such terms and to such purpose as would prevent him, she hoped and believed, from ever venturing near the house again. Such were the terms in which Mrs. Vanstone concluded that first part of her letter which referred exclusively to Captain Wragge.

Although the statement thus presented implied a weakness in Mrs. Vanstone's character which Miss Garth, after many years of intimate experience, had never detected, she accepted the explanation as a matter of course; receiving it all the more readily, inasmuch as it might, without impropriety, be communicated in substance to appease the irritated curiosity of the two young ladies. For this reason especially, she perused the first half of the letter with an agreeable sense of relief. Far different was the impression produced on her, when she advanced to the second half, and when she had read it to the end.

The second part of the letter was devoted to the subject of the journey to London.

Mrs. Vanstone began by referring to the long and intimate friendship which had existed between Miss Garth and herself. She now felt it due to that friendship to explain confidentially the motive which had induced her to leave home with her husband. Miss Garth had delicately refrained from showing it, but she must naturally have felt, and must still be feeling, great surprise at the mystery in which their departure had been involved; and she must doubtless have asked herself why Mrs. Vanstone should have been associated with family affairs which (in her independent position as to relatives) must necessarily concern Mr. Vanstone alone.

Without touching on those affairs, which it was neither desirable nor necessary to do, Mrs. Vanstone then proceeded to say that she would at once set all Miss Garth's doubts at rest, so far as they related to herself, by one plain acknowledgment. Her object in accompanying her husband to London was to see a certain celebrated physician, and to consult him privately on a very delicate and anxious matter connected with the state of her health. In plainer terms still, this anxious matter meant nothing less than the possibility that she might again become a mother.

When the doubt had first suggested itself, she had treated it as a mere delusion. The long

interval that had elapsed since the birth of her last child; the serious illness which had afflicted her after the death of that child in infancy; the time of life at which she had now arrived—all inclined her to dismiss the idea as soon as it arose in her mind. It had returned again and again in spite of her. She had felt the necessity of consulting the highest medical authority; and had shrunk, at the same time, from alarming her daughters by summoning a London physician to the house. The medical opinion, sought under the circumstances already mentioned, had now been obtained. Her doubt was confirmed as a certainty; and the result, which might be expected to take place towards the end of the summer, was, at her age and with her constitutional peculiarities, a subject for serious future anxiety, to say the least of it. The physician had done his best to encourage her; but she had understood the drift of his questions more clearly than he supposed, and she knew that he looked to the future with more than ordinary doubt.

Having disclosed these particulars, Mrs. Vanstone requested that they might be kept a secret between her correspondent and herself. She had felt unwilling to mention her suspicions to Miss Garth, until those suspicions had been confirmed—and she now recoiled, with even greater reluctance, from allowing her daughters to be in any way alarmed about her. It would be best to dismiss the subject for the present, and to wait hopefully till the summer came. In the mean time they would all, she trusted, be happily reunited on the twenty-third of the month, which Mr. Vanstone had fixed on as the day for their return. With this intimation, and with the customary messages, the letter abruptly, and confusedly, came to an end.

For the first few minutes, a natural sympathy for Mrs. Vanstone was the only feeling of which Miss Garth was conscious after she had laid the letter down. Ere long, however, there rose obscurely on her mind a doubt which perplexed and distressed her. Was the explanation which she had just read, really as satisfactory and as complete as it professed to be? Testing it plainly by facts, surely not.

On the morning of her departure, Mrs. Vanstone had unquestionably left the house in good spirits. At her age, and in her state of health, were good spirits compatible with such an errand to a physician as the errand on which she was bent? Then, again, had that letter from New Orleans, which had necessitated Mr. Vanstone's departure, no share in occasioning his wife's departure as well? Why, otherwise, had she looked up so eagerly the moment her daughter mentioned the post-mark? Granting the avowed motive for her journey—did not her manner, on the morning when the letter was opened, and again on the morning of departure, suggest the existence of some other motive which her letter kept concealed?

If it was so, the conclusion that followed was

a very distressing one. Mrs. Vanstone, feeling what was due to her long friendship with Miss Garth, had apparently placed the fullest confidence in her, on one subject, by way of unsuspiciously maintaining the strictest reserve towards her on another. Naturally frank and straightforward in all her own dealings, Miss Garth shrank from plainly pursuing her doubts to this result: a want of loyalty towards her tried and valued friend seemed implied in the mere dawning of it on her mind.

She locked up the letter in her desk; roused herself resolutely to attend to the passing interests of the day; and went down stairs again to the breakfast-room. Amid many uncertainties, this at least was clear: Mr. and Mrs. Vanstone were coming back on the twenty-third of the month. Who could say what new revelations might not come back with them?

CHAPTER IV.

No new revelations came back with them: no anticipations associated with their return were realised. On the one forbidden subject of their errand in London, there was no moving either the master or the mistress of the house. Whatever their object might have been, they had to all appearance successfully accomplished it—for they both returned in perfect possession of their every-day looks and manners. Mrs. Vanstone's spirits had subsided to their natural quiet level; Mr. Vanstone's imperturbable cheerfulness sat as easily and indolently on him as usual. This was the one noticeable result of their journey—this, and no more. Had the household revolution run its course already? Was the secret, thus far hidden impenetrably, hidden for ever?

Nothing in this world is hidden for ever. The gold which has lain for centuries unsuspected in the ground, reveals itself one day on the surface. Sand turns traitor, and betrays the footstep that has passed over it; water gives back to the tell-tale surface the body that has been drowned. Fire itself leaves the confession, in ashes, of the substance consumed in it. Hate breaks its prison-secrecy in the thoughts, through the doorway of the eyes; and Love finds the Judas who betrays it by a kiss. Look where we will, the inevitable law of revelation is one of the laws of nature: the lasting preservation of a secret is a miracle which the world has never yet seen.

How was the secret now hidden in the household at Combe-Raven, doomed to disclose itself? Through what coming event in the daily lives of the father, the mother, and the daughters, was the law of revelation destined to break the fatal way to discovery? The way opened (unseen by the parents, and unsuspected by the children) through the first event that happened after Mr. and Mrs. Vanstone's return—an event which presented, on the surface of it, no interest of greater importance than the trivial social ceremony of a morning call.

Three days after the master and mistress of Combe-Raven had come back, the female mem-

bers of the family happened to be assembled together in the morning-room. The view from the windows looked over the flower-garden and shrubbery; this last being protected at its outward extremity by a fence, and approached from the lane beyond by a wicket-gate. During an interval in the conversation, the attention of the ladies was suddenly attracted to this gate by the sharp sound of the iron latch falling in its socket. Some one had entered the shrubbery from the lane; and Magdalen at once placed herself at the window to catch the first sight of the visitor through the trees.

After a few minutes, the figure of a gentleman became visible, at the point where the shrubbery path joined the winding garden-walk which led to the house. Magdalen looked at him attentively, without appearing, at first, to know who he was. As he came nearer, however, she started in astonishment; and turning quickly to her mother and sister, proclaimed the gentleman in the garden to be no other than "Mr. Francis Clare."

The visitor thus announced, was the son of Mr. Vanstone's oldest associate and nearest neighbour.

Mr. Clare the elder inhabited an unpretending little cottage situated just outside the shrubbery fence which marked the limit of the Combe-Raven grounds. Belonging to the younger branch of a family of great antiquity, the one inheritance of importance that he had derived from his ancestors, was the possession of a magnificent library, which not only filled all the rooms in his modest little dwelling, but lined the staircases and passages as well. Mr. Clare's books represented the one important interest of Mr. Clare's life. He had been a widower for many years past, and made no secret of his philosophical resignation to the loss of his wife. As a father, he regarded his family of three sons in the light of a necessary domestic evil, which perpetually threatened the sanctity of his study and the safety of his books. When the boys went to school, Mr. Clare said "Good-by" to them—and "Thank God" to himself. As for his small income, and his still smaller domestic establishment, he looked at them both from the same satirically indifferent point of view. He called himself a pauper with a pedigree. He abandoned the entire direction of his household to the slatternly old woman who was his only servant, on the condition that she was never to venture near his books, with a duster in her hand, from one year's end to the other. His favourite poets were Horace and Pope; his chosen philosophers, Hobbs and Voltaire. He took his exercise and his fresh air under protest; and always walked the same distance to a yard, on the ugliest high road in the neighbourhood. He was crooked of back, and quick of temper. He could digest radishes, and sleep after green tea. His views of human nature were the views of Diogenes, tempered by Rochefoucault; his personal habits were slovenly in the last degree; and his favourite boast was, that he had outlived all human prejudices.

Such was this singular man, in his more superficial aspects. What nobler qualities he might possess below the surface, no one had ever discovered. Mr. Vanstone, it is true, stoutly asserted that "Mr. Clare's worst side was his outside"—but, in this expression of opinion, he stood alone among his neighbours. The association between these two widely-dissimilar men had lasted for many years, and was almost close enough to be called a friendship. They had acquired a habit of meeting to smoke together on certain evenings in the week, in the cynic-philosopher's study, and of there disputing on every imaginable subject—Mr. Vanstone flourishing the stout cudgels of assertion, and Mr. Clare meeting him with the keen edged-tools of sophistry. They generally quarrelled at night, and met on the neutral ground of the shrubbery to be reconciled together the next morning. The bond of intercourse thus curiously established between them, was strengthened on Mr. Vanstone's side by a hearty interest in his neighbour's three sons—an interest by which those sons benefited all the more importantly, seeing that one of the prejudices which their father had outlived, was a prejudice in favour of his own children.

"I look at those boys," the philosopher was accustomed to say, "with a perfectly impartial eye; I dismiss the unimportant accident of their birth from all consideration; and I find them below the average in every respect. The only excuse which a poor gentleman has for presuming to exist in the nineteenth century, is the excuse of extraordinary ability. My boys have been addle-headed from infancy. If I had any capital to give them, I should make Frank a butcher, Cecil a baker, and Arthur a grocer—those being the only human vocations I know of which are certain to be always in request. As it is, I have no money to help them with; and they have no brains to help themselves. They appear to me to be three human superfluities in dirty jackets and noisy boots; and, unless they clear themselves off the community by running away, I don't myself profess to see what is to be done with them."

Fortunately for the boys, Mr. Vanstone's views were still fast imprisoned in the ordinary prejudices. At his intercession, and through his influence, Frank, Cecil, and Arthur were received on the foundation of a well-reputed grammar-school. In holiday-time they were mercifully allowed the run of Mr. Vanstone's paddock; and were humanised and refined by association, in-doors, with Mrs. Vanstone and her daughters. On these occasions, Mr. Clare used sometimes to walk across from his cottage (in his dressing-gown and slippers), and look at the boys disparagingly, through the window or over the fence, as if they were three wild animals whom his neighbour was attempting to tame. "You and your wife are excellent people," he used to say to Mr. Vanstone. "I respect your honest prejudices in favour of these boys of mine with all my heart. But you are so wrong about them—you are indeed! I

wish to give no offence; I speak quite impartially—but mark my words, Vanstone: they'll all three turn out ill, in spite of everything you can do for them."

In later years, when Frank had reached the age of seventeen, the same curious shifting of the relative positions of parent and friend between the two neighbours, was exemplified more absurdly than ever. A civil engineer in the north of England, who owed certain obligations to Mr. Vanstone, expressed his willingness to take Frank under superintendence, on terms of the most favourable kind. When this proposal was received, Mr. Clare, as usual, first shifted his own character as Frank's father on Mr. Vanstone's shoulders—and then moderated his neighbour's parental enthusiasm from the point of view of an impartial spectator.

"It's the finest chance for Frank that could possibly have happened," cried Mr. Vanstone, in a glow of fatherly enthusiasm.

"My good fellow, he won't take it," retorted Mr. Clare, with the icy composure of a disinterested friend.

"But he *shall* take it," persisted Mr. Vanstone.

"Say he shall have a mathematical head," rejoined Mr. Clare; "say he shall possess industry, ambition, and firmness of purpose. Pooh! pooh! you don't look at him with my impartial eyes. I say, No mathematics, no industry, no ambition, no firmness of purpose. Frank is a compound of negatives—and there they are."

"Hang your negatives!" shouted Mr. Vanstone. "I don't care a rush for negatives, or affirmatives either. Frank shall have this splendid chance; and I'll lay you any wager you like he makes the best of it."

"I am not rich enough to lay wagers usually," replied Mr. Clare; "but I think I have got a guinea about the house somewhere; and I'll lay you that guinea Frank comes back on our hands like a bad shilling."

"Done!" said Mr. Vanstone. "No: stop a minute! I won't do the lad's character the injustice of backing it at even money. I'll lay you five to one Frank turns up trumps in this business! You ought to be ashamed of yourself for talking of him as you do. What sort of hocus-pocus you bring it about by, I don't pretend to know; but you always end in making me take his part, as if I was his father instead of you. Ah, yes! give you time, and you'll defend yourself. I won't give you time; I won't have any of your special-pleading. Black's white, according to you. I don't care: it's black, for all that. You may talk nineteen to the dozen—I shall write to my friend and say Yes, in Frank's interests, by to-day's post."

Such were the circumstances under which Mr. Francis Clare departed for the north of England, at the age of seventeen, to start in life as a civil engineer.

From time to time, Mr. Vanstone's friend communicated with him on the subject of the new pupil. Frank was praised, as a quiet,

gentlemanlike, interesting lad—but he was also reported to be rather slow at acquiring the rudiments of engineering science. Other letters, later in date, described him as a little too ready to despond about himself; as having been sent away, on that account, to some new railway works, to see if change of scene would rouse him; and as having benefited in every respect by the experiment—except, perhaps, in regard to his professional studies, which still advanced but slowly. Subsequent communications announced his departure, under care of a trustworthy foreman, for some public works in Belgium; touched on the general benefit he appeared to derive from this new change; praised his excellent manners and address, which were of great assistance in facilitating business communications with the foreigners—and passed over in ominous silence the main question of his actual progress in the acquirement of knowledge. These reports, and many others which resembled them, were all conscientiously presented by Frank's friend to the attention of Frank's father. On each occasion, Mr. Clare exulted over Mr. Vanstone; and Mr. Vanstone quarrelled with Mr. Clare. "One of these days, you'll wish you hadn't laid that wager," said the cynic philosopher. "One of these days, I shall have the blessed satisfaction of pocketing your guinea," cried the sanguine friend. Two years had then passed since Frank's departure. In one year more, results asserted themselves, and settled the question.

Two days after Mr. Vanstone's return from London, he was called away from the breakfast-table before he had found time enough to look over his letters, delivered by the morning's post. Thrusting them into one of the pockets of his shooting-jacket, he took the letters out again, at one grasp, to read them when occasion served, later in the day. The grasp included the whole correspondence, with one exception—that exception being a final report from the civil engineer, which notified the termination of the connexion between his pupil and himself, and the immediate return of Frank to his father's house.

While this important announcement lay unsuspected in Mr. Vanstone's pocket, the object of it was travelling home, as fast as railways could take him. At half-past ten at night, while Mr. Clare was sitting in studious solitude over his books and his green tea, with his favourite black cat to keep him company, he heard footsteps in the passage—the door opened—and Frank stood before him.

Ordinary men would have been astonished. But the philosopher's composure was not to be shaken by any such trifle as the unexpected return of his eldest son. He could not have looked up more calmly from his learned volume, if Frank had been absent for three minutes instead of three years.

"Exactly what I predicted," said Mr. Clare. "Don't interrupt me by making explanations; and don't frighten the cat. If there is anything to eat in the kitchen, get it and go to bed. You

can walk over to Combe-Raven to-morrow, and give this message from me to Mr. Vanstone:—'Father's compliments, sir, and I have come back on your hands like a bad shilling, as he always said I should. He keeps his own guinea, and takes your five; and he hopes you'll mind what he says to you another time.' That is the message. Shut the door after you. Good night."

Under these unfavourable auspices, Mr. Francis Clare made his appearance the next morning in the grounds at Combe-Raven; and, something doubtful of the reception that might await him, slowly approached the precincts of the house.

It was not wonderful that Magdalen should have failed to recognise him when he first appeared in view. He had gone away a backward lad of seventeen; he returned a young man of twenty. His slim figure had now acquired strength and grace, and had increased in stature to the medium height. The small regular features, which he was supposed to have inherited from his mother, were rounded and filled out, without having lost their remarkable delicacy of form. His beard was still in its infancy; and nascent lines of whisker traced their modest way sparsely down his cheeks. His gentle wandering brown eyes would have looked to better advantage in a woman's face—they wanted spirit and firmness to fit them for the face of a man. His hands had the same wandering habit as his eyes; they were constantly changing from one position to another, constantly twisting and turning any little stray thing they could pick up. He was undeniably handsome, graceful, well-bred—but no close observer could look at him, without suspecting that the stout old family stock had begun to wear out in the later generations, and that Mr. Francis Clare had more in him of the shadow of his ancestors than of the substance.

When the astonishment caused by his appearance had partially subsided, a search was instituted for the missing report. It was found in the remotest recesses of Mr. Vanstone's capacious pocket, and was read by that gentleman on the spot.

The plain facts, as stated by the engineer, were briefly these. Frank was not possessed of the necessary abilities to fit him for his new calling; and it was useless to waste time, by keeping him any longer in an employment for which he had no vocation. This, after three years' trial, being the conviction on both sides, the master had thought it the most straightforward course for the pupil to go home, and candidly place results before his father and his friends. In some other pursuit, for which he was more fit, and in which he could feel an interest, he would no doubt display the industry and perseverance which he had been too much discouraged to practise in the profession that he had now abandoned. Personally, he was liked by all who knew him; and his future prosperity was heartily desired by the many friends whom he had made in the north. Such was the substance of the report, and so it came to an end.

Many men would have thought the engineer's

statement rather too carefully worded; and, suspecting him of trying to make the best of a bad case, would have entertained serious doubts on the subject of Frank's future. Mr. Vanstone was too easy-tempered and sanguine—and too anxious as well, not to yield his old antagonist an inch more ground than he could help—to look at the letter from any such unfavourable point of view. Was it Frank's fault if he had not got the stuff in him that engineers were made of? Did no other young men ever begin life with a false start? Plenty began in that way, and got over it, and did wonders afterwards. With these commentaries on the letter, the kind-hearted gentleman patted Frank on the shoulder. "Cheer up, my lad!" said Mr. Vanstone. "We will be even with your father one of these days, though he *has* won the wager this time!"

The example thus set by the master of the house, was followed at once by the family—with the solitary exception of Norah, whose incurable formality and reserve expressed themselves, not too graciously, in her distant manner towards the visitor. The rest, led by Magdalen (who had been Frank's favourite playfellow in past times), glided back into their old easy habits with him, without an effort. He was "Frank" with all of them but Norah, who persisted in addressing him as "Mr. Clare." Even the account he was now encouraged to give of the reception accorded to him by his father on the previous night, failed to disturb Norah's gravity. She sat with her dark handsome face steadily averted, her eyes cast down, and the rich colour in her cheeks warmer and deeper than usual. All the rest, Miss Garth included, found old Mr. Clare's speech of welcome to his son, quite irresistible. The noise and merriment were at their height, when the servant came in, and struck the whole party dumb by the announcement of visitors in the drawing-room. "Mr. Marrable, Mrs. Marrable, and Miss Marrable; Evergreen Lodge, Clifton."

Norah rose as readily as if the new arrivals had been a relief to her mind. Mrs. Vanstone was the next to leave her chair. These two went away first, to receive the visitors. Magdalen, who preferred the society of her father and Frank, pleaded hard to be left behind; but Miss Garth, after granting five minutes' grace, took her into custody, and marched her out of the room. Frank rose to take his leave.

"No, no," said Mr. Vanstone, detaining him. "Don't go. These people won't stop long. Mr. Marrable's a merchant at Bristol. I've met him once or twice, when the girls forced me to take them to parties at Clifton. Mere acquaintances, nothing more. Come and smoke a cigar in the greenhouse. Hang all visitors—they worry one's life out. I'll appear at the last moment with an apology; and you shall follow me at a safe distance, and be a proof that I was really engaged."

Proposing this ingenious stratagem in a confidential whisper, Mr. Vanstone took Frank's arm, and led him round the house by the back

way. The first ten minutes of seclusion in the conservatory, passed without events of any kind. At the end of that time, a flying figure in bright garments flashed upon the two gentlemen through the glass—the door was flung open—flower-pots fell in homage to passing petticoats—and Mr. Vanstone's youngest daughter ran up to him at headlong speed, with every external appearance of having suddenly taken leave of her senses.

"Papa! the dream of my whole life is realised," she said, as soon as she could speak. "I shall fly through the roof of the greenhouse, if somebody doesn't hold me down. The Marbles have come here with an invitation. Guess, you darling—guess what they're going to give at Evergreen Lodge!"

"A ball," said Mr. Vanstone, without a moment's hesitation.

"Private Theatricals!!!" cried Magdalen, her clear young voice ringing through the conservatory like a bell; her loose sleeves falling back, and showing her round white arms to the dimpled elbows, as she clapped her hands ecstatically in the air. "The Rivals is the play, papa—the Rivals by the famous what's-his-name—and they want me to act! The one thing in the whole universe that I long to do most. It all depends on you. Mamma shakes her head; and Miss Garth looks daggers; and Norah's as sulky as usual—but if you say Yes, they must all three give way, and let me do as I like. Say yes," she pleaded, nestling softly up to her father, and pressing her lips with a fond gentleness to his ear, as she whispered the next words. "Say Yes—and I'll be a good girl for the rest of my life."

"A good girl!" repeated Mr. Vanstone—"a mad girl, I think you must mean. Hang these people, and their theatricals! I shall have to go in-doors, and see about this matter. You needn't throw away your cigar, Frank. You're well out of the business, and you can stop here."

"No he can't," said Magdalen. "He's in the business too."

Mr. Francis Clare had hitherto remained modestly in the background. He now came forward, with a face expressive of speechless amazement.

"Yes," continued Magdalen, answering his blank look of inquiry with perfect composure. "You are to act. Miss Marrable and I have a turn for business, and we settled it all in five minutes. There are two parts in the play left to be filled. One is Lucy, the waiting-maid; which is the character I have undertaken—with papa's permission," she added, slyly pinching her father's arm; "and he won't say No, will he? First, because he's a darling; secondly, because I love him and he loves me; thirdly, because there is never any difference of opinion between us (is there?); fourthly, because I give him a kiss, which naturally stops his mouth and settles the whole question. Dear me, I'm wandering. Where was I, just now? Oh yes! explaining myself to Frank—"

"I beg your pardon," began Frank, attempting, at this point, to enter his protest.

"The second character in the play," pursued Magdalen, without taking the smallest notice of the protest, "is Falkland—a jealous lover, with a fine flow of language. Miss Marrable and I discussed Falkland privately on the window-seat while the rest were talking. She is a delightful girl—so impulsive, so sensible, so entirely unaffected. She confided in me. She said, 'One of our miseries is that we can't find a gentleman who will grapple with the hideous difficulties of Falkland.' Of course I soothed her. Of course I said, 'I've got the gentleman, and he shall grapple immediately.'—'Oh, Heavens! who is he?'—'Mr. Francis Clare.'—And where is he?'—'In the house at this moment.'—'Will you be so very charming, Miss Vanstone, as to fetch him?'—'I'll fetch him, Miss Marrable, with the greatest pleasure.' I left the window-seat—I rushed into the morning-room—I smelt cigars—I followed the smell—and here I am."

"It's a compliment, I know, to be asked to act," said Frank, in great embarrassment. "But I hope you and Miss Marrable will excuse me—"

"Certainly not. Miss Marrable and I are both remarkable for the firmness of our characters. When we say Mr. So-and-So is positively to act the part of Falkland, we positively mean it. Come in, and be introduced."

"But I never tried to act. I don't know how."

"Not of the slightest consequence. If you don't know how, come to me, and I'll teach you."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Vanstone. "What do you know about it?"

"Pray, papa, be serious! I have the strongest internal conviction that I could act every character in the play—Falkland included. Don't let me have to speak a second time, Frank. Come and be introduced."

She took her father's arm, and moved with him to the door of the greenhouse. At the steps, she turned and looked round to see if Frank was following her. It was only the action of a moment; but in that moment her natural firmness of will rallied all its resources—strengthened itself with the influence of her beauty—commanded—and conquered. She looked lovely: the flush was tenderly bright in her cheeks; the radiant pleasure shone and sparkled in her eyes; the position of her figure, turned suddenly from the waist upwards, disclosed its delicate strength, its supple firmness, its seductive serpentine grace. "Come!" she said, with a coquettish beckoning action of her head. "Come, Frank!"

Few men of forty would have resisted her, at that moment. Frank was twenty, last birthday. In other words, he threw aside his cigar, and followed her out of the greenhouse.

As he turned and closed the door—in the instant when he lost sight of her—his disinclination to be associated with the private theatricals revived. At the foot of the house-

steps he stopped again; plucked a twig from a plant near him; broke it in his hand; and looked about him uneasily, on this side and on that. The path to the left led back to his father's cottage—the way of escape lay open. Why not take it?

While he still hesitated, Mr. Vanstone and his daughter reached the top of the steps. Once more, Magdalen looked round; looked with her resistless beauty, with her all-conquering smile. She beckoned again; and again he followed her—up the steps, and over the threshold. The door closed on them.

So, with a trifling gesture of invitation on one side, with a trifling act of compliance on the other: so—with no knowledge in his mind, with no thought in hers, of the secret still hidden under the journey to London—they took the way which led to that secret's discovery, through many a darker winding that was yet to come.

PINCHBACK'S COTTAGE.

THE stage English cottage and the real English cottage are two very different things.

The canvas fabric—over-dressed with painted roses, at whose door the rustics who are perpetually striking work in order to come forward and sit down, and sing gaily about Annette at a little flimsy three-legged green table—bears very little resemblance to poor Pinchback's cottage in Downshire. There are no flowers near it, but a good deal too much of dung-heap; it is not a bower of roses; it is a nest of rheumatism and a den of ague and low fever.

But then the stage world, it may be said, is not meant to represent English life exactly; and it must be confessed that Sally Pinchback, who wears old top-boots of the squire's, and her father's great-coat, and goes out from seven A.M. to five P.M. stone-picking in the fields, does not bear much resemblance to that maypole dancing ballet-girl Annette, who comes on the stage in an exceedingly short gown, and carries a crook with bunches of blue ribbon tied to it—which is in everybody's way—and a little flower-basket on her left arm—which is of no use. It would be needless to describe, therefore, the economy of the stage labourer's cottage, as a preparation to describing that of the real Downshire labourer's; so we proceed at once to discuss the merits and defects of the latter, and the duties of landlords to increase the advantages of such residences, and to diminish the number of their evils.

The country clergyman, and all who know the poor well and love that patient long-suffering race, feel deeply how much the present miserable condition of the labourer's cottage not only diminishes his happiness, but lowers his morality. No one will deny that poor Pinchback, leads a hard life. No Opera in it, Lady Mouser—no hunting, Lord Rasper—no gay theatre, young Mr. Pitt—no club, your Grace—no books, dear authors—no grand tours, excellent travellers! No; Pinchback rises at dark and goes

to work; and he comes home after dark, eats his supper, and goes to bed. So passes his life away.

Could he plead his own cause, as great men have pleaded well that of the Russian serf and the American slave, he would give you a homely but touching narrative of much suffering and much toil. Long stormy February nights spent in watching the sheep at the lambing time; long painful days devoted to thrashing, when his back has been racked with rheumatism; long days of damp ploughing; long seasons of sickness, when it has been hard to keep body and soul together, with a wife and four children to feed and clothe in times of no work; a life dull and uneventful, yet not without its heroic moments, its passionate sorrows, its communings with God, its strong resolves, its bright hopes and simple joys.

Pinchback's is a life, surely, that needs some domestic solaces to soothe its monotony, to charm away its vexations, and to diminish its temptations. The wife and children may do much to render this hard life bearable; but, above all, his home, the house itself, ought to be habitable and comfortable; it ought to be large enough, it ought to be dry and warm enough, it ought to be well drained, it ought to be healthy, and it ought to spare the much-worked man, by being near his work.

Luckily for Pinchback, he lives in a stone county—a county where stone is cheap, because it is abundant and accessible. He lives, so far, like a nobleman in comparison with mechanics possessing twice his income, who are penned-up near London in rows of flimsy brick houses, without air, drainage, warmth, dryness, or comfort. It is a sturdy cottage, built of stout blocks of grey stone, and standing square and steadfast, braving all the winds, blow they ever so madly. It is a grave self-respecting grey mottled house; it would be a yeoman's house in a brick or flint county, like Surrey or Kent; but here it is merely the house of a poor farm labourer, earning his poor eight shillings a week, the ordinary wages in Downshire. Pinchback pays but one shilling a week for this stone castle; and difficult enough sometimes, he finds it to pick up that same shilling, poor fellow!

It is a little Tudor cottage—no box of stucco—a building, simple though it is, of a marked period and style. It has a good sheltering porch; it has four stone-shafted windows, the mullions firm and massy, and the diamond panes leaded in the old-fashioned way. True, the mullions bar out a little of the light, but then there is quite enough of it without, and the door is, moreover, left open on all fine days. There is reason, too, even in the lattice panes, for they take very little glass, can be easily mended with any spare scraps, and do not often need the village glazier.

The roof is thatched—dangerous for fire, but otherwise picturesque and cheap, warm, dry, and lasting. A handful of straw repairs it when it needs repair; and, what is better, Pinchback himself can mend it in a spare hour.

That the little square of garden for which our man pays sixpence a week additional rent is not pleasanter to the eye and more useful, is Pinchback's own fault. It certainly boasts a pale China rose or two in the autumn, a bunch of cockaded hollyhocks in the summer, and a tuft of snowdrops in the spring. But its chief staple is a clump of lank green cabbage-stalks, as much cut and notched and crossed about, as if Pinchback used them for almanacks, as Robinson Crusoe did his post. Perhaps it is difficult to cultivate a very fine sense of the beautiful, on eight shillings a week.

Let us enter at the unpainted door, lifting up the loose trigger-latch with a click. The well-smoked roof is too low for sound ventilation; it gives us warmth, but we want air; that is the first thing that strikes us. The furniture is simple enough—a stool, two or three rude wooden chairs—not so sound as they might be about the legs—two or three shelves for plates and mugs, a dresser, a cracked table, and a small looking-glass with half the quicksilver gone, is all we see. A bench fastened round the wall would be an excellent thing where room is scanty and furniture is too dear to buy; it would do for the children, and at cleaning times it would be useful for jugs and pans.

But we forgot the fine arts, the genuine old masters that adorn Pinchback's house. There is a portrait, highly coloured, of that worthy monarch King George the Fourth, who was certainly not so black as he is here painted. There is a picture of the Prodigal Son driving a curriole, and also a fancy sketch of Turpin's flight over a turnpike gate after he has shot Tom King. Above the mantelpiece, very brown with smoke, is a curious early religious picture—subject unknown, probably never known—supposed to be by one of those very early Italian painters whose works the National Gallery is becoming so "rich in." On nails over the fireplace there repose an old ship musket and a boxwood flute—played to very melancholy tunes thirty years ago, when Pinchback went "a courting," and was in rather a depressed state of mind concerning Sally Wilton, who afterwards jilted him and married a baker. In a corner of the room rest an earthy spade, a hoe, and a pickaxe, all shiny about the metal tips. These implements constitute what may be called, perhaps, Mr. Pinchback's family plate.

The fireplace is old-fashioned—a cave, in fact, built in with projecting walls, and forming a sort of heat-trap, or half-open oven in itself. The fire is on the hearth, and on a level with the walls of the room; and, on each side of it, there is ample and snug room for two or three cold or wet people, seeking warmth and comfort. It has not only the enormous advantage of affording two shut-in nooks, free from all draughts, but it gives you three sides of a fire

* Cheap strong furniture ought to be made in larger quantities for the poor. The writer has known a widow and her children, for sheer want of any other place, dine off the coffin of the dead father—a horrible and revolting sight.

instead of one—three warmths instead of one; the best of the heat not going up the chimney, and leaving behind only a poor residue of outer blaze to seorch you.

Now, if this fireplace question were a mere question of extra comfort, we would not lay so great a stress upon it, though want of warmth often drives a poor man to the public-house fire; but there are other arguments against the impoverished modern fireplace. Downshire is a sheep county, and therefore a county of shepherds. Watching sheep in a down-country, and on cold spring nights, is no joke, when the wind blows like thunder, and the rain drives in one's face. Three drenchings in twelve hours is no bad preparation for an old age of rheumatism—particularly when your dress is chiefly a worn and patched pair of trousers, and a washed-out brown linen smock-frock. At day-break the shepherd off duty drags home to his cottage to get a change of clothes, to warm his half-frozen limbs, and to "get a bite" at a warm breakfast. In the old snug chimney-corner, with half the fire to himself, he soon dries his smock, warms himself through, and is ready for breakfast; but at the modern poor half-starved grate, with the cooking going on in competition, what chance has the poor drenched soul of either heat or comfort?

To our mind, nothing is so cold and dismal as your modern model labourers' cottages. They are square boxes, monotonous and intolerable, with no snug nooks, no little convenient bins, no odd corners, cozy and handy. They are as dreary as mathematical problems. They are comfortable. They do very well in books and lithographs, but they are not fit for humanity; they are fit only for the demure smug dream-figure, who has no human wants, no human passions, no human failings, and who is so plastic in the hands of some philanthropic theorists. They are places invented for another kind of humanity: not for the kind of humanity to which the reader and the writer belong.

Yet while we praise the old stone cottage of the Downshire Pinchbacks for many things, we cannot but lament many of its internal arrangements. It has but two bedrooms; and there are four children—two girls, a boy, and a grown-up son.

Every new cottage should contain three bedrooms at least: one for the man and his wife, one for the boys, and another for the girls. In cases of illness, too, or infectious disease, the want of such division has led to thousands of deaths. The wretched drainage of the labourer's house is too well known to need any additional condemnation. Few cottages in Downshire have sewers or cesspools. The chronic rheumatism of the old labourer, the frequent low fevers and contagious diseases of their children, are referable, in great part, to this radical defect. Illness with the poor man means bitter poverty, scant wages, cruel dunning, and perhaps the dreaded workhouse or starvation. It means to the country increased poor-rates, more vicious pauper children, and more hereditary beggars.

We know cottages—and belonging to rich men, too—in Downshire, where, at certain seasons, we have seen the woman of the house dip down and fill her kettle from water welling up close to the very fireplace; we have seen, in a neighbouring house, a girl, dangerously ill with rheumatic fever, lying on chairs, the legs of which were half hidden in water. Of the dunghills and filthy ash-heaps that too frequently defile and pollute the front of cottages, we say little, because their removal depends generally on the tidiness, energy, and self-respect of the labourer; but the bad drainage, that fruitful source of disease, is beyond his power to remedy. Pinchback cannot afford to buy drain-pipes, nor could he spare time to put them down were he even to buy them. It is the rich landlord's bounden duty to promote the health and well-being of his tenants. It is all but murder to get money by letting houses that breed inevitable disease and death. Even selfishness can suggest no reason for not building healthier and better cottages for the labourer. It has been proved, by the severest statisticians, that to build labourers' cottages is to invest money well, and to obtain a good interest for it. Here, in Downshire, two good stone cottages can be built for two hundred and seventy pounds: though, of course, it is easy to spend as much as three hundred pounds upon one.

The aim of many English squires now, is, to reduce to the minimum the number of cottages on an estate, for fear of that increase of poor's-rate which only the criminal neglect of our well-deserving aged poor in past times can have produced. To let the cottages fall and decay, or to pull them down, is now the squire's ignoble ambition. During their period of decay, the poor pine in them, rather than move far from their work. We have known poor men, who, being unable to get a house in their native village, have had to walk every day three or four miles to work—a cruel addition to a hard day's labour.

One of the chief causes, we believe, of the present neglected state of the labourer's cottage is the following: The labourer does not generally rent his house direct from the landlord, but through the farmer. Now, the two indigenous plants of the English soil are the landlord and the labourer. The farmer, too often, has little or no affection for the children of the soil. He has not always learnt their ways or their feelings. We do not hold that all rich squires are too considerate of the poor man's hardships; but still they have often a respect for old and honest servants, and a wish to retain them, and they are for many reasons more likely than farmers to listen to their just complaints.

The labourer's lot grows harder every year. The cottages grow older and more unhealthy. The commons—their former playgrounds and pasture-grounds—get daily taken from them and enclosed. The smallest and meanest plots are now barred up by penalties; rabbits, though they swarm by thousands, the labourer may not touch; forest-wood he must no longer burn and use.

He knows that he is destined after a hard life to die in a workhouse, and he bears his destiny, cart-horse like, with becoming obedience. How can a man living on eight shillings a week lay by anything for old age? He has his rent to pay, and perhaps four children and a wife to keep. True, his master, Farmer Spikes, lets him have wheat at prime cost, and he gets a little wood and some other perquisites; but it is the most he can do to make both ends meet, even if no rainy weather come, in the shape of illness—and yet it must come, to him or to his.

We want to see no ideal labourer—no smooth-faced inanity, with short sleek hair, hypocritical demeanour, and lip-profession of all the cardinal virtues and more—we like your red-faced, sturdy, somewhat obstinate, heavy-moving farm-servant, who works hard, likes his master, and fears God. We like him for his possibilities, and even for what he now is. We see in the fattest-faced young Downshire rustic, the raw material of all the Nelsons, Wellingtons, Watts, Stephensons, Burnses, and Shakespeares that ever were. We see in him the divine soul, the human heart, the capability of all joy and all sorrow. We know that these poor men, if our England were in danger, would still perform deeds of heroism and devotion before which the deeds of even old Greece and Rome would pale. We know that those hardy shepherds on our downs would, to defend those very miserable cottages, devote themselves by thousands to the fire and to the sword, rather than let one yard of dear English land be polluted by the foot of an invader. Could their landlords shed their blood one whit more readily?

THE DEAD POPE.

THE whole day long had been wild and warm, With a heavy forewarning of what was to come. There had been, indeed, no such horrible storm For many a year, men say, in Rome. I remember, it burst just after the close Of the day when the dead Pope was laid in the Dome Of Peter, taking his last repose To the grief of all good Christendom.

I suppose that here, on account of the story,
It is fit I should mention that, when he died,
He was of a good old age,—grown hoary
In wearing the purple much to men's pride.
Of a truth, he had sate so long in Rome,
Sate so long in Peter's chair,
Ruling the world, that he was come
To keep his power apart from care.
His eyes were wan with the steam,
And his hair was scatter'd and white
With the hoar, of many years;
And decrepitude's misty fume,
Like the watery blunt starlight,
And thin snow, of an old March night
As its wearied face appears
Bathed cold in a clammy grey,
Before the sluggish season clears
Its winter rubbish away.
Yet winter's wine-cup cheers
The dull heart of its discontent:
And he was a jolly Pope, and a gay,
A man much given to merriment.
So, leaving the wolf to look after the sheep,

Whilst ever the stormy nobles raved,
And the wickedness ran over in Rome,
And sinners, grown stout, refused to be saved,
Save, now and then, by a martyrdom,
He smiled, and, warming his heart with wine,
Daily, gaily, quaff'd the cup.
Meanwhile, there were some who seem'd to opine,
By their sour faces and doggerel verses,
That the cup so quaff'd was cramm'd with curses;
And one jack-knave (for his pains hanged up),
In a pasquinade profane, each line
Of which it is certain, word for word,
The Devil, whose scribe he was, dictated
(A wretched spinner of rhymes!), averr'd
That the dreadful Vintager, as stated
By the pens of prophets still, no doubt, trod
The wine-press red with the wrath of God,
And, to claim the blood of His bruised vine,
Unseen, for the final signal waited
In the Pope's own palace? Who does not know
The Devil is apt to quote Scripture so?
But the poet once hang'd, the scandal abated.
And so, while those two ever-famous keys
Of the double world's due-accredited porter
From the good man's girle hung at their ease,
And the days grew chillier, darker, shorter,
The cellar key in the cellar door,
Doing service for those same rusty twins,
Daily, gaily, all the more,
Made music among the vaults and bins.

And oh, what a Paradise was there,
Set open by that little key!
The soul of every grape fed full
From teeming Tuscan slopes, or where
In amber eves, along the lull
Of lucid lengths of ardent air
Drunken roams the droning bee
Down many a mellow Umbrian dell:
The juice of all the jollity
Of that Oscan family
Of vine-clusters stout that dwell
Round sunburnt hills that stop the swell
Of the dear, the dreamy sea,
Whose soul doth pour from a purple floor
Into hot curves of a yellow shore
Sound of summer evermore,
Bathing blue Parthenope
So warmly and so well!
All the thousand sparklets, too,
Lit with laughter thro' and thro'
In Asti's grape, the ever new:
Or from scatter'd vineyards set
Where the innumerable violet
In Castel d'Aso blooms and springs
Purpleing the tombs of Tuscan kings:
Montepulciano, the master-vine;
Chianti, that comforts the Florentine:
With many a merry-hearted wine
Broach'd from bowers to Sylvan dear,
Where, in the golden fall of the year,
From each misty mountain thrashing-floor
Floats the song, as falls the flail,
Thro' happy hill-side hamlets, o'er
Dante's own delicious vale,
Whose sweetness hangs in odours frail
Of woods and flowers round many a tale
Of tears, along the lordly line
Of the scornful Ghibeline—
Dante's vale, and Love's, and mine,
The pleasant vale of the Carentine!
Nor lack'd there many and many a train
Of kingly gifts, the choicest gain

Of terraced cities over the sea,
 Or gardens where, with his daughters three,
 King Hesperus, could he come again,
 Might choose to abide, nor sigh in vain
 For a joy as great as his Golden Tree:
 The fiery essence of fierce Spain,
 The soul of sunburnt Sicily,
 The French, the Rhenish vintage, all
 The purple pride of Portugal—
 Whole troop of Powers celestial,
 The slayers of sullen Pain!
 Oh, what spirits strong and subtle!
 Whether to quicken the pulses' play
 And dance the world like a weaver's shuttle
 To and fro in the dazzling loom
 Where Fancy wears her wardrobe gay,
 Or soften to faintness, faint as the fume
 From silver censurs swung away
 To music, making a mellow gloom
 The too intrusive light of the day!
 Some that bathe the wearied brain
 And untie the knotted hair
 On the pucker'd brows of Care,
 Soothe from heavy eyes the stain
 Of tears too long suppress'd, make fair,
 With their divinest influence,
 Fate's frown, or feed with nectar-food
 The lips of Longing, and dispense
 To the tired soul despair'd of good,
 Others that stir in the startled blood
 Like tingling trumpet notes intense,
 To waken the martial mood.
 By the mere faint thought of it, well, I wis,
 Such a heaven on earth were hardly amiss,
 And I hold it no crime to set it in rhyme
 That I think a man might pass his time
 In company worse than this.

But, however we pass Time, he passes still,
 At the same set pace, whatever the pastime,
 And, whether we use him well or ill,
 Some day he gives us the slip for the last time;
 So even a Pope must finish his ill,
 And follow his time, be it feast time or fast time,
 As it happen'd with this same Pope, no doubt.
 When he would not wake after that last bout,
 The case was clear. So they laid him out.
 "He is gone," they said, "where there's no returning.
 Of the College who is the next to come?"
 Then they set the bells tolling, the tapers burning,
 And bore him up into Peter's dome.

After the organ's drowning note
 Grew hoarse, then hush'd, in his golden throat,
 And the latest loiterer, slacking his walk,
 Cast one last glance at the catafalk,
 And, passing the door, renew'd his talk,
 Suspended by the late solemnity,
 As to that last raid of Prince Colonna,
 "What villages burn'd? and what hope of indemnity?"

The last new beauty fresh from Verona,
 With the nimbus of red gold hair, God bless her!
 And who should be the late Pope's successor?
 I say, that, as soon as the crowd was gone,
 And never a face remain'd in sight,
 As the tapers began to be burning dim,
 Just about the time of the coming on
 And settling down of the ghostly light,
 The sudden silence so startled him,
 That the dead Pope at once rose up.

And first, he fumbled and stretch'd the hand,
 Feeling for the accusom'd cup

(For the taste of the wine was yet in his mouth);
 And, finding it not, and next with drouth,
 Somewhat feebly he call'd out
 Then, louder, longer, lustier, and
 Fiercelier, east, west, north, and south.
 But, no one coming to his command,
 He rubb'd his eyes, and look'd about,
 And saw, thro' a swimming mist each face
 Of his predecessors, gone to Grace
 Many a century ago,
 Sternly staring at him so
 (From their marble seats, a mournful row),
 As who should say: "Be cheerful, pray!
 Make the best of it as you may.
 We are all of us here in the same sad case.
 Each in his turn, we must, one by one, die,
 Even the best of us—
 God help the rest of us!
 Your turn, friend, now. Make no grimace.
 Consider, *sic transit gloria mundi!*"
 He began to grow aware of the place.
 A chilly strangeness, more and more,
 Crept over him, never felt before,
 As he step'd down to the marble floor.
 He look'd up and down, above him and under,
 Fill'd with uncomfortable wonder.
 What should persuade him that he was dead
 A horrible humming in the head,
 A giddy lightness about the feet,
 Last night's wine and this night's heat!
 He could sniff, by the incense afloat on the air,
 Some service, not yet so long o'er
 But what he might have slept unaware,
 Nor yet quite waked. What alone made him fear
 Was that draperied, lighted, black thing there
 Not quite like a couch, and much like a bier.
 At any rate, "Wherefore linger here?"
 He thought; and hurriedly pushing by
 The curtain heavy with brodery,
 He pass'd out thro' the great church door.

So, forth, on the vacant terrace there,
 Overlooking the mighty slope
 Of never-ending marble stair,
 'Twixt the great church and the great square,
 Stood the dead Pope.
 On either side, glade heap'd on glade
 Of colossal colonnade,
 Lost at last in vague and vast
 Recesses of repeated shade
 By the stupendous columns cast,
 In midst of which, as they sang and play'd,
 Fire and sound the fountains made,
 Under the low faint starlight laid
 Not far above their splendours bright,
 Fresh interchange of laughers light,
 Mix'd with the murmur of the might
 Of royal Rome, which far in sight,
 Revelling under the redness wide
 Of lamps now winking from hollow and height
 With a voice of pride on every side
 Made ready to receive the night.
 So all at once, and all around,
 The silence changed itself to sound,
 More terrible than mere silence is—
 The sound of a life no longer his!
 Fresh terror seized him where he stood;
 Or the fear that follow'd him, shifting ground,
 Fresh onslaught made; and he rested, afraid
 To call or stir, like a sick owl, stray'd
 From a witches' cave back again to the wood
 Wherein, meanwhile, the noisy brood
 Of little birds, with lusty voice,

Made free of his absence, begin to rejoice,
And he halts in alarm lest perchance, if he cries out,
Those creatures, fit only to furnish him food,
Already by liberty render'd loquacious,
Picking up heart and becoming audacious,
Should forthwith fall to picking his eyes out.
Indeed, one might fairly surmise
By the noise in the streets, the shouts and cries,
That all the men and women in Rome,
From the People's Gate to St. Peter's dome,
Tho' clad in mourning each and all,
Were making the most of some festival.
Walking, driving, talking, striving,
Pushing, rushing,
Crowding, crushing,
Crying, outvying
In selling and buying,
Each with the rest,
To do his best,
To add to the tumult, each contriving
To make, in pursuit of his special joys,
Somewhat more than the usual noise.
Since it is not every day in the week
That one Pope dies, and another's to seek;
Such an event is a thing to treasure.
For a general mourning's a general meeting,
A sort of general grief-competing,
Which leads, of course, to a general greeting
(Not to mention general drinking and eating)
That is quite a general pleasure.
The universal animation,
In a word, you could hardly underrate.
So much to talk of, so much to wonder at!
The Ambassadors, first, of every nation,
Representing the whole world's tribulation,
Each of them grander than the other
In due gradation for admiration;
How they looked, how they spoke, what sort of
speeches?

What sort of mantles, coats, collars, and breeches?
Then the Cardinals all in a sumptuous smother
Of piety warm'd by the expectation
That glow'd in the breast of each Eminent Brother,
Of assuming a yet more eminent station,
Much, he hoped, to each well-beloved brother's vex-
ation.

And then, the Archbishops, and Bishops, and
Priors,

And Abbots, and Orders of various Friars,
Treading like men that are treading on briars,
Doubtful whom in the new race now for the state run
They should hasten to claim as their hopeful patron.
The Nobles too, and their Noble Families,
Prouder each than the very devil,
Yet turn'd all at once appallingly civil,
And masking their noble animosities,
For the sake of combining further atrocities;
And, after each of the Noble Families,
Each Noble Family's faithful Following,
Who, picking their way while the crowd kept hol-
loaing,

Stuck close to their chiefs, and proudly eyed them,
Much the same as each well-provender'd camel eyes,
In the drouthy desert, when groaning under
Their pleasing weight of public plunder,
The dainty despot boys who ride them.
A host, too, of Saints with their special religions
And patrons, of rival rank and station,
Deck'd out in all manners
Of ribbons and banners,
Painted papers
And burning tapers
Enough to set in a conflagration

The world; you would think by the fume and flare
of them

And the smoky faces of those that took care of them,
Marching along with a mighty noise
Of barking dogs, and shouts and cheers,
Brass music and bands of singing-boys
Doing their best to split men's ears,
And starting up the very pigeons
On the roof-tops all in a consternation.

The excitement was surely justifiable.
The more so if, having fairly computed
The importance, necessity, and function
Of a Pope, as divinely instituted,
You consider the fact, which is undeniable,
That, when deprived of its special pastor,
The whole of earth's flock, without compunction,
Must consider itself consigned to disaster.
For if the world, say,
Could go on as it should,
Doing its duty, fair and good,
Missing no crumb of its heavenly food,
For even a week or a day,
In the absence of Heaven's representative—
Might it not be assumed from any such tentative
Process, if this each time succeeded,
That a Pope on the whole was hardly needed?
And that, if it could ever befall
That Heaven should be pleased, after due delay,
Its Viceroy on Earth to recal,
And abolish the past—just as good and as gay
The world would go on in the usual way
Without a Pope at all?

One thing, however, was justly provoking:
Amidst the millions jostling, joking,
As merry as so many prodigal sons
Having kill'd and roasted their fattened calf
And enjoying the chance to quaff and laugh—
There was not one of the millions
Who seem'd aware of the dead Pope there,
Or even very much to care
What meanwhile had become of His Holiness,
How he must feel now, or how he might fare,
Who all the while, was nevertheless
Sole cause of the general joyousness!
It was certainly hard to bear.

But why bear it longer?

His heart beat stronger:

If he raised his hand, would any man stand?
If he called would any man come

Of the million men and women in Rome
So lately at his command?

His hand he raised. No man look'd to it.

His finger. Not a knee was crook'd to it.

He raised his voice. No man heeded it.

He gave his blessing. No man needed it.

'Twas the merest waste of benevolence
(Since the holiday went on with or without him);

He might have been, to all intents,

The golden Saint stuck up on the steeple,

Who is always blessing a thankless people,

Nobody caring a button about him.

A Pope's blessing: and nobody bless'd by it!

A Pope's menace: and no man impress'd by it!

A Pope's curse: and no one distress'd by it!

Had the world been suddenly deafen'd and blinded?

The dead Pope menaced: nobody minded.

The dead Pope call'd: not a creature hasten'd.

The dead Pope curs'd: no sinner seem'd chasten'd.

He might bless or curse, neither better nor worse,

For a single word that he said.

On its wonted way a world perverse

Went onward, nobody bowing the head

Either for hope, nor yet for bread.
Then the dead Pope *knew* that he was dead.

He walked onward—nobody stopping him,
Ever onward—no lip dropping him
A *salve reverentia*,
Till the streets behind him, one by one,
Fell off, and left him standing alone
In the mighty waste of Rome's decay.
Meanwhile, the night was coming on
Over the wide Campagna:
Hot, fierce, a blackness without form,
And in her breast she bore the storm.
I never shall forget that night:
You might tell by the stifling stillness there,
And the horrible wild-beast scent on the air,
That all things were not right.

On Monte Cavi the dark was nurst,
And the Black Monks' belfry towers above;
Then vast the sea of vapour burst
Where forlorn Territian Jove
Hears only the owl's note accurst
'Mid his fallen fanes no more divine;
And, from the sea to the Apennine,
And swift across the rocky line
Where the blighted moon dropp'd first
Behind Soracte, black and broad
Up the old Triumphal Road,
From Palestrino post on Rome,
Nearer, nearer you felt it come
The presence of the darkening Thing;
As when, dare I say, with outspread wing,
By some lean Prophet summon'd fast
To preach the guilt of a stiff-neck'd king,
Over the desert black in the blast
On Babylon or Egypt red
The Angel of Destruction sped.
Earth breathed not, feigning to be dead,
While the whole of heaven overhead
Was overtaken unawares,
First here, then there, then everywhere!
Into the belly of blackness sackt
Sank the dwindling droves of buffaloes
That spotted the extreme crimson glare;
Then the mighty darkness stronger rose,
Washing all the width of air,
And cross'd the broken viaduct
Flung forth in dim disorder there
Like the huge spine bone
Of the skeleton
Of some dead Python pleased to obstruct
The formless Night-hag's filmy path;
Thence on, mid the glimmering creeks and nooks,
Putting out quite
The pal'd light
Of the yellow flowers by the sulphur brooks
That make a misty brimstone bath
For the Nightmare's noiseless hoof:
And, leaving the quench'd-out east aloof
The plague from Tophet vomited
Struck at the west, and rushing came
Right against the last red flame
Where in cinders now the day
Self-condemn'd to darkness lay,
With all his sins upon his head
Burning on a fiery bed,
Shapeless, helpless, overthrown!

Now to all the world it is well known
How the Devil rides the wind by night,
Doing all the harm he can,
In the absence of heaven's light,
To the world's well-order'd plan,

And with murrain, mildew, blight
Marring the thrift of the honest man,
Which most doth move his spite.
Certainly he was out that night
Before the fearful storm began,
For, lo, on a sudden, left and right
The heaven was gash'd from sky to sky,
Seam'd across, and sunder'd quite
By a swift, snaky, three-forkt flash
Of brightness intolerably bright,
As, ever, the angry Cherub, vow'd
To vengeance, fast thro' plunging cloud,
Wielding wide his withering lash,
That wild horseman now pursued;
Who lurk'd, his vengeance to illude,
In deep unprobed darkness still.
Forthwith, the wounded night 'gan spill
Great drops; then fierce—crash crush on crash—
As it grieved beneath each burning gash,
The darkness bellow'd; and outsprang
Wild on the plain, whilst yet it rang
With thunder, the infernal steed,
And dash'd onward at full speed
Blind with pain, with streaming mane
And snorting nostril on the strain,
Where, dash'd from off his flanks the rain
Thro' all the desolate abyss
Of darkness now began to hiss.

Alas! for any poor ghost of a Pope
In such a night to be doom'd to grope
Blind beneath the hideous cope
Of those black skies without a star
For the way to where the Blessed are!
And if the Evil One himself
Was his conductor thro' the dark,
Or, if dislodged from its sky-shelf
Some cloud was made his midnight bask,
Or if the branding bolt that rent
The skies asunder hewed for him
Thro' that disfigured firmament
Beyond the utmost echoing rim
Of thunder-brewage, and the black
Enormous night, some shining track
Up to the Sapphire Throne where throng
The Voices crying, "Lord, how long?"
While the great years are onward roll'd
With moans and groanings manifold,
I know not, for it was not told.

The story here (as you may conceive it)
Becomes in every way perplexing.
As from others it happen'd to me to receive it,
Nothing novel thereto annexing,
Neither diminishing, nor augmenting,
Nor inserting out of my own inventing,
I would wish to relate it; but, each way I state it,
There remains sufficient cause to doubt.
I cannot convince myself about it,
So many different versions
From so many different persons.

It would seem, however, that all agree
(And this should suffice us, at any rate)
In assuming for certain that, early or late,
The dead Pope got to the golden Gate
Where the mitred Apostle sits with the key
— Peter, whose heir on earth was he.

And further than this to speculate
We surely should not be justified.
Tho' a fact there is, I am bound to state:
A renegade Monk avers he descried
In a vision that very night,

While the storm was spending its fiercest hate
(And what he saw, so much the sight
Impress'd him, he wrote as soon as he woke
— Was it a dream or a wicked joke?),
What pass'd before that Gate.

And, since after the fashion most in vogue,
He wrote it in form of a dialogue,
Not averring, as he did, the tale to be true,
In all else, as he wrote it, I write it for you.

VOICE OUTSIDE THE GATE.

Peter, Peter, open the Gate!

VOICE WITHIN THE GATE.

I know thee not. Thou knockest late.

FIRST VOICE.

Late! yet Peter, look and see
Who calleth.

SECOND VOICE.

Nay, I know not thee.

What art thou?

FIRST VOICE.

Peter, Peter, open

The Gate!

SECOND VOICE.

What art thou?

FIRST VOICE.

I? The Pope.

SECOND VOICE.

The Pope, what is it?

FIRST VOICE.

In men's eye

Thy successor once was I,
What was there was given to me.

SECOND VOICE.

Martyrdom and misery?

FIRST VOICE.

Nay, yet power to bind and loose.
In thy name have I burn'd Jews
And heretics, and all the brood
Of unbelief—

VOICES FAR WITHIN.

Avenge our blood,

Lord!

FIRST VOICE.

And in thy name have blest
Kings and Emperors, confest
Earth's spiritual head, whilst there
I sat ruling in thy chair.

VOICES FAR WITHIN.

Woe, because the Kings of Death
Were with her in her wicked mirth!

FIRST VOICE.

In thy name, and for thy cause,
I made peace and war, set laws
To lawgivers—

VOICES FAR WITHIN.

And all nations

Drunk with the abominations!
Of her witchcraft.

FIRST VOICE.

In thy name,

And for thy cause, to sword and flame
I gave sinners, and to those
Who fear'd the friends and fought the foes
Of him from all manhood selected
To keep thy name and cause respected,

Riches and rewards I gave,
And the joy beyond the grave.

VOICES FAR WITHIN.

Souls of men, too, chafing lies,
Did she make her merchandise.

FIRST VOICE.

By all means have I upheld
Thy patrimony—nay, 'tis swell'd.

VOICES FAR WITHIN.

For herself she glorified
In the riches of her pride.

FIRST VOICE.

Wherefore, Peter, open the gate,
If my knocking now be late.
Little time, in truth, had I
—I, the Pope, who stand and cry
For other cares than those that came
Upon me, in thy cause and name
Holding up the heavy keys
Of Heaven and Hell.

SECOND VOICE.

If so, if these

Thou hast in keeping, wherefore me
Callest thou? Thou hast the key.
Truly thou hast waited late,
Open then thyself the gate.

And here the Monk breaks off to state,
With befitting reflections by the way,
With what great joy the Pope, no doubt,
Soon as he heard the stern voice say
Those words, began to search about
Among his garments for the key
Which, strange to say, 'twould seem that he
Had not bethought him of before.
And now that joy from more to more
Wax'd most (the historian of his dream
Observes as he resumes the theme)
When after search grown desperate
A key he found, just at his need,
Seem'd at the worst—a key indeed!
But, ah, vain hope! for, however the Pope
Tried the key in the fasten'd gate,
Turning it ever with might and main
This way, that way, every way at last,
Forwards, backwards, round again
Till his joy is turn'd to sheer dismay at last,
And his failing force will no longer cope
With the stubborn gate it declines to open.
A key, indeed! but not, alas,
THE KEY! Who shall say what key it was?
The Monk who here, I must believe,
Is laughing at us in his sleeve
(Like any vulgar story-teller,
Fabling forms to vent his spleen),
Surmises that it must have been
The key of the Pope's own cellar.

TRANSFER OF COLONIAL LAND.

Adelaide, South Australia, Nov. 26, 1861.

SIR,—About two years back there appeared in *All the Year Round* an article headed "Economy in Sheepskins," descriptive of the method of conveyancing by registration of title in operation in this colony. Your article was doubtless written with a view to disseminate information upon a question of great importance, yet it may

be gratifying to you to learn that your favourable notice has also operated as an encouragement to us in this remote part of the empire, struggling against the very powerful and very unscrupulous hostility of the legal profession.

By the present mail I forward to you a copy of the Report of a Commission, comprising amongst its members our late chief justice, Sir C. Cooper; our present chief justice, Mr. R. D. Hanson; and two leading members of the legislative council, appointed by government to investigate the working of that system which has had the support of your powerful advocacy, and their report affords conclusive evidence of the success of that system.

The inexorable logic of facts set forth in the return given in the Appendix of that report, affords the best reply to our opponents, showing that, during little more than three years, in the face of misrepresentations and intimidations by the conveyancers, land exceeding one million and a half in value has been brought under the new system upon the voluntary application of two thousand six hundred and fifty-two proprietors; that nearly half a million sterling has been secured by mortgage upon that land; and that, in all, five thousand four hundred and seventy-one transactions have been completed under the system without any of the disastrous results so confidently predicted by its opponents.

The report itself contains an outline of the procedure that has led to results so satisfactory. The instructions to officers of the department and the circular letters for the information of land brokers and proprietors dealing under the act, exhibit the working in minute details. It must, however, be acknowledged that the hostility of the conveyancers has worked beneficially for the cause.

The combination to conduct, free of cost, all cases adverse to the validity of the Real Property Act has operated on the officials employed as a stimulant to caution and vigilance, and has occasioned a very searching inquisition into the structure and language of the act which they administer. The refusal of the conveyancers to conduct business under that act has induced the educated to transact their own business, and occasioned the licensing of brokers to act for the uneducated, and for all who prefer paying a moderate fee to the trouble of transacting their own affairs.

Those brokers are sworn; they give heavy security; their charges amount to about one-eighth per cent on the value in ordinary dealings, and the result is, that the public have learned that there is no more occasion for the services of the conveyancer in selling, mortgaging, or leasing land under the provisions of the Real Property Act of South Australia, than there is in filling up a banker's cheque, a bill of exchange, or a transfer of scrip.

The neighbouring colonies are now profiting by our example. Queensland has already adopted our measure. In Tasmania it has

passed the second reading in the legislative assembly by acclamation. I have also prepared a bill for Victoria at the request of the government of that colony, and am in communication with members of the legislature of New South Wales upon the same subject.

In the two last-named colonies, however, it is to be feared that the powerful opposition of the legal profession will operate to retard the adoption of the measure.

The only difficulty experienced in working the system in this colony, arises from the vague and frequently erroneous descriptions of boundaries and parcels given in grants and conveyances of land, and from the absence of permanent landmarks on the ground. Our system, you will perceive, is capable of indefinite expansion, without any risk of confusion, or of its becoming cumbrous or unwieldy, and although, as is remarked in the report, the machinery for bringing land under the provisions of the act in the first instance would require some modification in order to adapt it for dealing with English titles, complicated as they are by trusts and settlements, I am yet satisfied that the facilities for determining boundaries which exist in the old country would more than counterbalance the comparative difficulties arising from complication of titles, and that its application to the lands of England would not be attended with any greater risks or difficulties than those which have been successfully encountered in this colony.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most humble servant,

ROBT. TORRENS,
Registrar-General, South Australia.

LONG-SEA TELEGRAPHS.

CHAPTER THE SECOND AND LAST.

THE manufacture of a submarine, is a much more complicated affair than that of a land, telegraph. A stout iron wire, passed through porcelain or other non-conducting rings, wherever it has to be attached to a pole or a tree, will afford almost instantaneous communication at either end, and require none of the protection essential where wires are carried either under the earth or under the sea. The difficulties of manufacture arise not only from the necessity of providing a cable strong enough to resist the wear and tear of tides and the hauls and pulls of dredges and ships' anchors; but also, because it is necessary to obtain, under considerable difficulties, the best "insulation" and the utmost "conductivity." These two terms, insulation and conductivity, must be so often used in describing electric, and especially submarine, cables, that it will be well to begin this chapter by explaining them.

A telegraph wire may for our purposes be compared to a pipe, which, according to its diameter, has a capacity for conveying water. Conductivity is the capacity of a wire to convey electric power. High conductivity is capacity to convey, from an electrical generator of a cer-

tain power, a great quantity of electricity in a given time. Insulation is the method which guards the wire against what (to compare the wire with a pipe) may be called leakage. On land and in the air a thick wire is no disadvantage, and may be useful, and it is sufficient that the wires be insulated by glass, porcelain, or other non-conductors, wherever they touch a support connected with the ground. But wires laid in earth or water, without insulation, would leak, like a pipe full of holes, and the earth or water would absorb the electric current.

A submarine cable must be composed of some insulated conductor, strengthened by other surrounding materials, to protect it from injury while it is being paid-out of a ship and after it has been laid at the bottom of the sea. The Blue-book committee report that, in the fifty cables laid, the same general principles prevail—viz.: 1. The central conductor is a copper wire, or strand of wires. 2. The insulating covering is gutta-percha. 3. The external covering when used, consists of hemp or other fibrous material, impregnated with pitch or some other resinous substances, and, over that, in nearly all cases is iron or steel wire. The whole is, in form, an ordinary twisted rope. 4. The cables so prepared have been paid-out over the stern of an ordinary vessel, generally a steam-boat, with a friction-brake to regulate the delivery, according to the speed of the vessel. This speed has averaged from four to six knots an hour.

The conducting wire of submarine cables has in all cases been copper, because it has more conducting power than any other metal, and is very durable. It was originally used for land telegraphs, but it stretched too much, and, besides, offered an irresistible temptation to the purveyors for marine store shops, where there is a permanent demand for any quantity of copper wire. A Prussian commissioner gravely reported that mice eat not only gutta-percha, but copper wire. The conducting power of copper to iron is as one to eight, so that a copper wire one-tenth of an inch diameter is equivalent, as an electric conductor, to an iron wire nearly one-third of an inch in diameter. But on land the extra size of wire is an advantage. It is scarcely possible to obtain perfectly pure copper, and there is no substance which, added to pure copper, increases its conducting power. The difference between the conductivity of various qualities of copper is very great. Thus experiments made for the information of the committee showed that, taking pure copper at one hundred, Spanish Rio Tinto was, leaving out decimals, only fourteen; Russian, sixty; "tough" copper, seventy-one; Burra Burra, eighty-six and three-quarters; a specimen cut from a piece one and a half ton weight, nearly ninety-nine. It is of the utmost importance that the best and purest copper should be tested for submarine cables. Hitherto no proper guarantee for the purity of the copper wire has been exacted from cable contractors.

The first cables were made of a single copper wire, and, if this could be obtained of unlimited

length and uniform quality, it would perhaps be the best plan; but, practically, a single wire was found to be weak at the solderings of the joints, and still more at places in the wire where it was not well annealed. There, it was brittle, and frequently broke off before it left the manufacturer's yard or the hold of the ship. But the ends of the wire, covered with gutta-percha, would frequently remain in contact, and answer any electrical tests applied, until in paying-out a strain came on the cable, then the two ends separated and broke the continuity of the conductor, although externally it appeared perfect. As an improvement on the single wire, bundles of wire, in the form of a strand, were used, and a number of very ingenious plans have been devised by different persons for increasing the strength and protecting these wires from injury by the percolation of water through the covering.

The insulating covering first used for electric wires was india-rubber; but it was soon found that, although it possessed insulating properties of the highest order, although it is tough, highly elastic, of less specific gravity than water, extremely durable under water, and nearly impervious to moisture, it had, besides minor defects, the fatal one of rotting, or rather burning and consuming, when exposed to light, and it was also extremely difficult to work into joints or joinings. After several trials, india-rubber was superseded by gutta-percha. Gutta-percha, when perfectly pure, and under moderate temperatures, is a remarkably good insulator, capable of being kneaded and drawn solidly through dies, and although the joints required care, the difficulty of making them was not so great as with india-rubber. But gutta-percha in a raw state is far from pure, and is consequently a very imperfect insulator. Jacobi, the celebrated Russo-German professor, in a paper read before the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg, relates that, being commanded, in 1844, to carry the telegraph invented by Baron Schilling across a gulf, he set to work to use the first parcel of gutta-percha imported into Russia, "furiously," for the stupid officials employed to report on the plan had rejected with ridicule the idea of carrying the telegraph along poles in the air. But the raw gutta-percha, although laid on with extravagant thickness, failed utterly. Submarine cables could not be satisfactorily worked until machinery had been invented for purifying and reducing it to an homogeneous mass. Even at the present day, according to Jacobi, it is only in England, where the manufacture is carried on on a great scale, that gutta-percha of a reliable quality can be obtained, and it has often happened that a single fissure, not larger in the commencement than a pin's point, by admitting the sea water to the wire, has destroyed the whole value of a submerged cable. Amongst the most recent improvements referred to by the Blue-book committee is that of using fine ribands of thin gutta-percha to wind round the wire, instead of kneading over each joint with a thick sheet of the same material.

Until very recently gutta-percha was the only material used to insulate submarine cables, although experience had shown that even when most carefully manufactured it could not resist the heat of tropical climates. At a temperature of a little over two hundred and twenty degrees Fahrenheit gutta-percha is entirely spoiled. While the committee were sitting, improvements in the manufacture of gutta-percha were completed, by which it can be rendered a perfect insulator, and delivered in commercial quantities. Important improvements have also been made in the manufacture of india-rubber, by which all, or almost all, the defects of manipulation, which obstructed its previous use, have been removed. Under Silver's process the raw india-rubber is masticated, that is, torn into small fragments by steel teeth, and re-kneaded into a solid mass from which eventually thin adhesive ribands of almost unlimited length can be obtained. As india-rubber bears a very high degree of temperature without loss of insulating power, and is of extreme if not unlimited durability when protected by water from the action of the air, it may be expected that this new manufacture will come into use for those hot climates where gutta-percha fails, and where submarine telegraphic communication is most urgently required.

There is also a patent material, partly composed of gutta-percha, called "Wray's compound," of the insulating properties of which the committee, after careful experiments, speak highly. All the other substances to which their attention was directed by divers patentees were inferior in insulating qualities to gutta-percha.

In order to strengthen the cable against the strain which inevitably occurs in paying-out over a ship's stern, and on many other occasions, various expedients are adopted. In the first cable laid successfully between Dover and Calais, the core was first surrounded with a considerable thickness of hemp steeped in Stockholm tar and tallow, and then with a covering of iron wire laid on spirally. The weight of the cable was made so great that it was effectually protected from injury from the anchors of coasting vessels. This arrangement was admirably suited to the circumstances in which that cable was placed; it has consequently been very durable, and been the type of other cables laid in very different situations. All experience has since shown that in shallow waters a large heavy cable is the most economical arrangement. But in dealing with long distances and deep seas it is impossible to use cables of proportionate weight unless ships of enormous capacity were specially constructed for the purpose. The Atlantic cable, which was very slim as compared with the Dover cable, considering the work it had to do, required two vessels of three thousand two hundred tons to carry each half.

Wire, however small, will break with its own weight at a length of about three miles. An iron rod, however thick, will break at the same length. Therefore, in dealing with deep sea cables, the strain can only be relieved by an

alteration of the proportion between the absolute weight of the rope in water and the absolute strength of the cable, and this is not always obtained by a simple decrease of the specific gravity of the rope, as many imagine. Thus, to take an instance from the evidence of one of the witnesses, "suppose a wire-covered cable be served round with hemp, giving the spiral of the hemp a very short lay, the hemp will not take its strain with the iron, and can consequently add nothing to the strength of the cable. Hemp is, however, heavier than water, the cable will not, therefore, support so great a length of itself as it did before the hemp was added, as it has no greater strength, and yet has a greater weight per yard run. The specific gravity of the whole rope is, however, less than it was before the addition of the hemp; for, as the specific gravity of the hemp is less than that of the iron-covered cable, the mean specific gravity of the two taken together must be less than the iron-covered cable taken alone. Here, then, the modulus of tension is actually decreased by a decrease of specific gravity." On the other hand, steel, with about the same specific gravity as iron, has greater strength, and gutta-percha wire, being of but little greater specific gravity than water, might be out any length with any increase of strain. A cable of the specific gravity of a gutta-percha wire, and strong enough to resist the rubbings and strains to which a submarine cable must be subject in deep waters, would be perfect. But all attempts have as yet failed to produce a covering strong enough to resist strains, durable enough to resist decay, and of less specific gravity than iron or steel. There are, however, before the telegraphic public a crowd of patentees, each certain that his combination and arrangement of iron or steel and copper wire, with its coverings, is the one thing needed for a perfect cable, for the greatest distances, and the deepest seas, whose earnest statements must be received with the greatest caution.

Supposing a suitable cable decided on, the bottom of the sea where it is about to be laid should be surveyed and analysed. Hitherto, the course of a cable has been too much left to hap-hazard; in future, it is to be hoped that a careful investigation of the route will be the first step. The failures in laying submarine cables have generally been due to unsuitable ships and defects in the paying-out apparatus. "The ship," say the committee, "should be of large capacity, to admit of the cable being easily coiled without injury; care should be taken to isolate the hold from the engine-room, as the heat would injuriously affect a gutta-percha covering. The hold should be of a form to allow the cable to be paid-out without materially altering the trim of the ship, which should have sufficient power to maintain a speed of from four to six knots per hour, in the direction in which it is proceeding, in any weather, and it should be very steady in a rough sea." Therefore, to do the work of laying submarine cables in the best manner, ships must be built for the special purpose, and

"it is believed that such ships, when not engaged in laying cables, would be found useful for the ordinary purposes of commerce."

Supposing the ship ready, the cable is coiled in the hold with as much regularity as possible, each layer kept in its place under the old arrangements, by lashings of hemp, and sometimes by palings of wood. Relays of hands must be ready, while the ship is going at full speed, to hand out the coils with great rapidity, and yet with great regularity, to prevent their being thrown into the brake more speedily than required, while the lashings and palings must not be removed before the cable is wanted. But an arrangement, patented by Messrs. Newall, renders this part of the work much more simple and easy. It consists of a cone in the centre of a circular hold, round which the cable is coiled. Rings suspended round this cone guide the leading part of the rope up to the deck, from whence it finds its way to the brake over the stern. Under this arrangement few hands are required in the hold, and the rope sweeps regularly and smoothly round, so that all danger of fouling is removed. It next passes through the brake, and requires most delicate handling to ensure the proper strain. If sufficient pressure be not put on the brake, the cable runs out, from its own weight, with greater speed than the ship, and there is not only a waste of slack cable, but it is liable to get into "kinks." Personal skill on the part of the crew and engineer is of the utmost importance in doing this part of the work—of more importance than any mechanical arrangements, however theoretically perfect. Of course the greatest difficulties occur in deep waters. During this time it is to be hoped that not only has a correct calculation been made of the length of rope required, allowing for the inevitable slack in great depths, but that a straight course has been steered, and that can only be maintained by very exact precautions.

The earliest cables were laid under the directions of engineers who had had some experience in nautical matters, and who therefore adopted the precautions for securing a straight course that would occur to a seaman, whilst, at a more recent date, cables were laid with about as much care as a schoolboy employs to fly a kite.

In the first cable between England and Holland, though the operation was performed during a gale of wind and in a rapid tideway, only three and a half per cent. of length beyond that required for the direct measured distance was laid. The actual distance across was 114½ miles; the length of the cable laid was 119 miles. The tide being transverse to the course, first on one side and then on the other, the following was the plan adopted: Two tugs were employed always ahead of the vessel containing the cable. A straight course was made by these tugs alternately. As it was in shallow seas, buoys were placed, to make for alternately during the day; at night, Bengal lights were exhibited from the tugs. Thus, the whole distance was, as it were, "ranged" beforehand. The smallness of the

per-centage of waste must be attributed to these precautions. "A vessel to show the way is essential, because the compasses of the conveying vessel must be affected by the varying quantity of iron cable as it is veered over the stern."

But, should the wire be unbroken when it reaches the ship's hold—should it not "kink" or twist preparatory to snapping—should it, in short, be duly laid, other unobserved defects may destroy its use weeks or months after it has been set to work. Among the most fatal things that can happen to a submarine cable are "faults" by which a "conducting communicator" are established between the copper wire and the surrounding water. An almost imperceptible fissure is sufficient to effect this. It may arise from air holes in the process of manufacturing gutta-percha, or from the wire not being in the centre of the insulating material, and thus a slight abrasion may cause it to protrude. A wire properly centred may be displaced in consequence of the softening of the insulating material when exposed to high temperature. The presence of any of the foreign bodies which are found in unpurified gutta-percha and india-rubber is a certain cause of defective insulation. Nevertheless, the Blue-book committee report that very efficient tests have been devised to ascertain the existence of faults in a covered wire during or after the process of manufacture, "and we do not doubt that a cable may be delivered by a manufacturer entirely exempt from faults."

But, although the perfect cable has been laid at the bottom of the sea, it has still to undergo the dangers of the deep. It may be cut through by ships' anchors or dredges; it may be cut by the friction of a current across sharp rocks; it may be corroded by some mysterious action; in a word, from some cause or other it may be spoiled or broken.

It then becomes necessary to lift it and repair it if it lies within liftable distance. To this operation we must again turn to the evidence of the one witness who combined nautical training with electrical engineering experience, ranging over not one great submarine but a series of cables, from the earliest to the latest. The repair of the Cagliari and Malta cable in 1859 is a good example of what has been done, and can be done, in this department of submarine engineering.

Mr. Webb (we quote from the Blue-book) made his electrical tests at Malta, calculated that the fault was a hundred and eighty-eight nautical miles from that island, and wrote to the directors of the Company to that effect. He then went out in the Elba steamer, grappled up the cable off the coast of Sicily, cut it, and buoyed the end leading to Malta, and then began picking up towards the fault. When twenty miles of cable were got in, it parted at the bottom, there being evidently some heavy weight there. This was in a hundred and sixty fathoms of water. After two more partings of cable and three weeks' work, the cable was spliced and completely repaired, and the fault was

found to be one hundred and seventy-five miles from Malta. Thus the calculations founded on electric tests had been only thirteen miles out in a distance of one hundred and seventy-five miles. These tests were only taken from one end; had it been possible to test from Cagliari also, a more accurate result would have been obtained. The same witness stated that he had grappled and lifted cables at one hundred and sixty fathoms, but he did not consider that there would be any difficulty in destroying a cable at five hundred or six hundred fathoms.

Some curious submarine discoveries are made in the course of these cable liftings. Cables have been found completely protected by an outer casing of marine animals. In the case of the Cagliari and Bona cable, "off Cape Spartivento, it was covered with young coral. It could not have laid on the ground, but must have been suspended over some gulf, for the young clean coral grew from it equally all round, radiating outwards so completely that not a particle of the cable was to be seen, and for forty or fifty fathoms it came out of the water like a huge coral necklace."

Encouraged by the early successes we have described, cables were manufactured and laid with a degree of carelessness that would be comic if it were not for the serious discouragement which has thus been inflicted on really sound schemes for submarine telegraphs. For instance: "One of the directors of the Mediterranean Telegraph Company—not an engineer—undertook to manage the whole engineering; and after making use of a competent engineer to lay down the first section from Spezzia to Corsica, tried his own hand at laying down the cable from the island of Sardinia to Algeria. He took no engineer even to assist him, and after two starts in 1855, when he never got farther than thirty miles from land, he failed, and brought back eighty miles of cable. It has since been stated that the second of these starts must positively have been made with less cable on board than the actual distance to the opposite coast. He was then allowed to throw on one side the eighty miles of cable, and have another longer lighter cable manufactured. With this, again, two fresh starts were made in 1856, with equal want of success—the only difference, that this time no cable was brought back. In 1858, competent contractors recovered the whole of the first cable and a large portion of the second. Finally, the company let the laying of a third cable by contract; but, as no engineer was employed to specify the work, the cable was designed with such a thin covering of gutta-percha as to render perfect insulation impossible, while the contract only specified that it should work for a week."

"Contractors are always willing to contract to lay down a cable that shall work for a week between any two points, provided they design it themselves and have no competition!"

For an excellent illustration of what may be called the "happy-go-lucky" style of laying cables, we have only to turn to the self-com-

placent evidence of an energetic speculator, a projector, or, to use one of the last words borrowed from imperial France, a concessionnaire, who has a talent for buying monopolies from governments and selling them to companies. In this capacity he was on board a steamer with a cable for connecting Algeria with Cagliari, in Sardinia. It was the first attempt to lay in very deep seas—over sixteen hundred fathoms. "We passed the greatest depths with perfect safety in the night. From some cause or other we drifted out of course to the west. At daylight I saw the French vessel which accompanied us decorated with flags—the officers were drinking champagne to celebrate their triumph. Our captain, who had never been out of the British Channel before, had given us warning in the night that we were drifting very much out of our course. I communicated this to the officer appointed by the French government to accompany us. He replied, 'We know what we are doing,' and offered to guarantee that we should arrive at Galita with ten miles of cable to spare.

"In the morning the captain said, 'Certainly, sir, we have been out of our course in the night; ask the French captain to give us the latitude and longitude.' Accordingly, by the aid of a black board they exchanged their figures. The French officers, after examining our black board, on which the figures were chalked two feet long, seemed in great consternation. They retired to their cabin, and on returning, signalled that we were right and they were wrong; with only eleven English miles of cable left, they were eleven nautical miles from the coast of Algeria." The witness did not explain why he was not provided with buoys, by which the cable might have been safely anchored, but he proceeds:

"We sent a message through the cable to Messrs. Glass and Elliott, to put in hand immediately from thirty to fifty miles of cable. That message was received. We held on for five days and nights in a very heavy sea. Most of the young clerks, who were Italians, were sick. On the fifth morning I was alone on deck watching the instruments, when I saw a message coming. I got up one of the clerks, as it came in Italian. It was a message from Messrs. Glass and Elliott, saying that several miles of cable were in progress. Within a few minutes the vessel gave a sudden plunge, and the cable broke."

Mr. Cromwell Varley, one of the Blue-book committee, gives us some idea of the rate at which communications may be transmitted through long distances, by relating an experiment he made in the International Telegraph Office. A slip written in London was sent round from Odessa, through Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga, Königsberg, Berlin, Hanover, and Amsterdam, to London. The highest speed attained between London and Odessa was six words per minute. English land lines are seldom worked at a higher rate than twenty-two words per minute. An entire hour's work will seldom show a higher speed than twelve or fifteen words per minute. The average length of words is four and a half

to five letters; but the public when telegraphing often suppress the a's, the o's, the t's, the in's, &c., and thus telegraphic words average a greater length, especially when such words as *Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft* occur, which, according to telegraph law, is one word all over Europe.

A little experiment by the same witness brings into curious relief the speed power of the telegraph. In November, 1860, a conversation was established between London and Odessa. London first called Berlin, and inquired about the weather. Berlin answered it is very cold. Have you any frost in London? We said, No. Then we asked for St. Petersburg, and put the same question to him. He replied it was very cold, and the snow was so deep they were using sledges. We asked for direct communication to Odessa. He put us through. The clerk at Odessa told us that with them flowers were in full bloom and no frost had appeared. Thus we had spoken, in one uninterrupted chain, through Berlin, St. Petersburg, to Odessa.

The effects of the reaction that followed the miserable failures of the Atlantic and Red Sea cables, and discouraged all deep-sea and long-sea submarine projects, are beginning to pass away, and there are now before the public several well-considered projects for uniting the old and new world. A substantial company is engaged in trying to repair the Red Sea telegraph, and even if that attempt should fail, there are sound engineering arguments in favour of making the connexion on the plan suggested by a witness already quoted—viz. by carrying the cables in short lengths "of, say, fifty miles in forty or fifty fathoms of water, along the shores of the Red Sea, and bringing the ends on shore"—"a small payment to the Arab chiefs for protection forming part of the cost of maintenance." Such a cable would be easily and quickly repaired, and the longest length of deep water would be from Muscat to Kurrachee, the rest being in comparatively shallow water. As our government always keeps several war steamers in the Red Sea, it would be easy to have an engineering staff on board one of them to execute submarine cable repairs. By this arrangement the cost of maintaining a steam-boat in those seas for the special purpose would be saved—no small item where coal costs eighty shillings a ton.

In July, 1860, Mr. F. C. Webb proposed to government a line of telegraph from Malta to Alexandria, on a novel plan. All former projects had consisted of lines direct between Malta and Alexandria, thus passing through eight hundred miles of deep water—in some places two thousand fathoms. He proposed that two stout cables should be laid from Malta to Tripoli, which, following a course shown on his plans, would not exceed more than two hundred miles in length, and lie in depths of less than eighty fathoms, with the exception of a few miles near Malta, where the depth would be about two hundred fathoms. From Tripoli to Alexandria, the line was to be carried along the coast on

poles, the protection of it being ensured by small subsidies to the Arab sheiks. If at any part of the route this arrangement proved impracticable, then the line was to be carried along the coast, in the sea, by means of short duplicate lengths of very stout submarine cables, touching on the coast every fifty miles, thus making repair and maintenance of the line easy. The project, having been referred by the Treasury to the Board of Trade, was approved by several experienced engineers. Eventually, the government ordered the cable intended for Rangoon and Singapore to be laid between Tripoli and Malta. Unfortunately, although the general route was adopted, and the cable laid on the exact line shown on the plans furnished to the Board of Trade, one of the most important features of the plan has been ignored in a very characteristic manner. Instead of attempting to carry any part of the line by land wires along the coast, or at any rate by short sections of stout submarine cables in duplicate, as detailed in the original proposition, a cable of inferior strength has been laid in two long stretches along the coast, from Tripoli to Alexandria, thus following the proposed route, but without the precautions indicated for its maintenance and repair. Thus the author has had the mortification of seeing government appropriate and mutilate his printed and detailed plans, in order to use up a certain length of cable which the government had in hand, and did not apparently know how to expend—the latest illustration of the art of cutting blocks with a razor.

Another project of an English engineer for making the transatlantic communications by short lengths, commencing at Gibraltar, and following the coast of Africa, neglected here, is now being carried out by the Spanish government. They propose to carry a cable from Cadiz to the Canaries, from thence to Cape de Verde, from thence to the Island of St. Paul, in the Southern Atlantic Ocean. Thence the longest stretch would be eight hundred miles, to the Island of San Fernando de Noronha, and thence to the Brazilian coast, which is a comparatively short distance. From the Brazilian coast the lines will pass along the shores of British and French Guiana to Trinidad, thence by the West India Islands to the Spanish possessions of Porto Rico and Cuba. From Cuba a line may be carried to Florida, and form a junction with all the lines of the late United States, and a branch may also diverge to Panama; while south from Brazil the system may be conducted to Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Ayres. Thus, by a circuitous course, with a number of comparatively short-sea branches, and with considerable local traffic, the Americas and Europe may be united. If this be done, there can be no doubt that the investment will pay good interest. At present, the government and Malta and Alexandria deep-sea line earns an income of six hundred pounds a week. That there are no insuperable difficulties in the way of long land lines through savage countries is proved by the fact that New York has been connected with

San Francisco by a line of land telegraphs through the deserts and by the Salt Lake City, and that the Indian system extends over the whole British territory. In a word, we have the materials, the machines, the manufactures, the engineers, the experience, the capital, for encircling the world with land and sea telegraphs. For success, nothing is needed but an honest intelligent use of existing materials and machinery, and a rigid exclusion of the jobbing concessionaire from any government deep-sea experiments.

KIT BUTLER FROM BOONVILLE.

SOME ten years ago, when travellers in Oregon suffered very severely from attacks of Indians, I was one of a party passing through that wild and unknown state, in my way to California. After a month's ride from the Willamette Valley, we diverged westward from the great emigrant trail, and found ourselves camped one evening on the trail to Crescent City, at its intersection by Deer Creek, an offshoot of the Illinois River. Our party consisted, besides myself, of two lethargic Germans, a feeble-minded young artist lately from London, and a stark taciturn hunter from Missouri. During our long journey I had tried to be companionable with each of my fellow-travellers in turn, and at last had fallen back on Kit Butler, the Missourian, with whom I gradually established terms of a smoking, not a speaking intimacy. On the evening of our encampment on Deer Creek, supper having been eaten and the horses picketed before setting the guard, each of us betook himself to his own private relaxation. This was for the German, sleep; for the artist, self-examination by help of a small glass on a comb-handle; for Kit and me, the resolving of ourselves into a vigorous smoking committee. When we had been smoking for some little time, Kit suddenly addressed me: "Mate," he said, "this hoss don't kinder fancy this har camp, he don't."

To my eyes, a better camping-ground could not have been selected. It was pitched on a flat prairie, where "wood, water, and grass" were each at hand, while, at the same time, there was no cover for lurking Indians nearer than the creek—a long rifle-shot distant. But Kit, I observed, had his eye, miles and miles away, on a thin spiral column of smoke.

"An Indian camp fire!" I exclaimed.

"And Rogue River too near," Kit growled.

I understood him. We were camped not far from the Rogue River, and it was likely enough the fire had been lit by an outlying party of The Rogue Tribe, who had earned their sobriquet from being notoriously the most rascally Indians in all Oregon. The night, however, passed without an alarm. In the morning, the Germans' cattle, already half foundered, were found to be so badly galled by careless saddling, that it was agreed we should halt for four-and-twenty hours, to give the poor brutes a chance of recruiting.

Kit, who never descended to argument, made a wry face at this plan, and, catching up his rifle, prepared, as was his custom, for a hunt. I went with him, and after some hours, we got within range of a herd, and shot for supper a small elk, or wapiti deer. On nearing camp again, we saw that our party had been joined by a young Indian lad. Equipped in a suit of dressed deerskin, with a good deal of Indian finery about him, he stood in an easy attitude by the camp fire, while our artist sketched him, and the Germans were looking on lazily. This admission of the Indian into camp was against all prairie laws, as it has been found that such visitors are invariably spies, and "trouble" is pretty sure to come of their visits. Kit, therefore, throwing down the venison, burst angrily into the group:

"I found him by the creek: I only wanted to draw him," explained the startled artist, dropping his sketching block and brush.

"Draw him!" Kit shouted, "I'll draw a bead on the young spy's carcass if he don't make tracks in less than no time. Mate!" said the ireful hunter to me, as the frightened red-skin darted across the plain, "jest fix your shooting-irons right, for we'll have 'trouble' afore long. This coon knows nought of Injuns, he don't."

Impatient to get away from our present camp, I was not sorry when the day drew to a close, and we began to prepare supper. While I chopped some wood for the fire, Kit cut up the carcass of the elk we had shot in the morning, and kneaded the flour for bread in the "prospecting" tin. When I had made up the fire, there was no water for the coffee. As usual, our companions had been loafing about, aiding little or nothing in the indispensable camp duties. Somewhat annoyed, I bade one of the loafers take our tin saucepan down to the creek to fill it. Of course there was a discussion of the lazy as to who should be at the trouble of performing this slight service. In the end, one of the Germans took the saucepan up, and, with an ungracious expletive, departed on his errand. My fire blazed away brightly. Kit's cake, propped up before it with a stone, was baking in the usual primitive prairie fashion, and the venison steaks, cut up into little chunks, threaded on to a peeled wand, were twirling over the embers. Still the German had not returned with the water. As, in spite of our hails, he did not emerge from the hollow of the creek, which had a steep bank considerably higher than a man, his fellow-countryman was despatched to see what he was doing. When he in his turn had disappeared down the bank, I noticed that Kit, who sat on the ground twirling the spit, let it fall into the fire, and seemed to listen anxiously to a sound that reached only an ear quick as his. But shortly an awful shout arose. It was a heartrending appeal for help, and I should have certainly responded to it by rushing down to the creek, but that the powerful grasp of Kit, who had now risen from the ground, withheld me. Again, and this time fearfully prolonged, the cry of a man in his extremity arose,

and we saw the second German struggling desperately from the creek. Even from the distance at which we stood, we could perceive that during the few moments of his absence, he had passed through a terrible ordeal, for his clothes, where not torn completely away, hung in strips about his person, and exposed the naked flesh, crimson with many slashes, telling that the cruel and silent knife had been at work on him. For a moment, this ghastly figure extended its arms piteously towards us, and uttered another cry, but fainter than before. It was his last effort. Apparently seized from behind by an unseen hand, the unfortunate man tottered for a moment, then threw up his arms, sank back, and disappeared down the creek. Kit was the first of the witnesses of this shocking tragedy to break silence. "Injuns!" he cried; but his explanation was superfluous, for as he uttered it a crowd of red-skins jumped forth from the creek, and charged down upon us with pealing whoops.

"Look to the cattle, or we'll all be rubbed out, by thunder!" shouted Kit, as we caught up our rifles. His warning was just in time. No white man's horse can brook the Indian whoop, and all those of ours that had hitherto been grazing quietly about, with their larvae dragging, galloped wildly over the prairie in full stampede, and were irrecoverably lost. Only three horses remained to us. They had luckily a short time before been hitched up to a tree near at hand. Before these terrified brutes could break away we had sprung to their heads, and effectually secured them by doubling their lassos. At first, panic-struck by the appalling sight I had just witnessed, and the critical position in which we were placed, I entertained the idea of flinging myself on to the back of one of the horses, and flying for my life, but the hunter restrained me. "Do as I do, mate," he said, with an admirable coolness that completely reassured me; and in obedience to his example, I took cover behind the horses, and levelled my rifle across their backs, point-blank at the approaching rout of red-skins. These, who were armed chiefly with bows and arrows, observing our demonstrations, and knowing that we were not to be taken by surprise, or without a certain loss to themselves—conditions utterly opposed to all Indian ideas of warfare—gradually faltered in their pace till they came to a standstill, and then broke and fled back to the cover of the creek in great confusion.

There being now breathing-time, I remembered the artist. Strange to say, he was nowhere to be seen, but Kit, who seemed to divine the reason of my puzzled looks, pointed up the tree beneath which we stood. I looked aloft, and dimly amid the foliage of the cedar I descried a dangling pair of bluchers that seemed familiar to me. They were the artist's. "Come down!" I shouted; "the Indians are gone." But my request met with no response, unless an irritable movement of the dangling boots was meant for a negative. Again I hailed them, when, as if to put an end to all further

argument, they ascended higher among the branches, and were lost to sight. "Guess the scared critter's best up the cedar," said Kit, adding suddenly, as he glanced over the prairie, "Hurrah! Now, mate, saddle up right smart." And while I rapidly equipped the horses, to my astonishment he busied himself in casting upon the fire all the property lying about the camp, with the sole exception of our own rifles and revolvers. "If yon varmint git us, they'll only git mean plunder," he said, grimly contemplating his work of destruction.

"The Indians in the creek, you mean?" I asked.

The hunter shook his head, and pointed southwards.

Following the direction of his arm, I made out through the fast fading twilight a band of horsemen galloping right down upon us. They were mounted Indians. As, doubtless, they were acting in concert with those on foot in the creek, it was plain that our position was no longer tenable. I perceived that Kit was of this opinion, for he was now hastily examining our three remaining horses. They were young American cattle that I had bought on the Columbia, as a speculation for the Californian market. Two of them were light, weedy-looking fillies; but the third, a powerfully-made chesnut stallion, with white feet, was by far the best of the lot.

"You will take the chesnut, he is the only horse at all up to your weight," I said to Kit, who was a seventeen stoner at least.

"Thankee, mate," he replied; "'tis kind of ye—yes, 'tis, to give up the best hoss; but I wish 'twur my ole spotted mustang. Don't kinder consate them white feet, and that eye ain't clar grit, it ain't!"

A few minutes were now wasted in endeavouring to persuade the artist to descend the tree and take the third horse; but, either on account of intense fear, or a conviction of the security of his "cache," he still made no sign. As the horsemen were now fast closing in upon us, and the footmen in the creek began to show themselves, as if with a design of cutting off our retreat, we were compelled unwillingly to leave this impracticable votary of "high art" to his fate. So, mounting our horses, and driving the third one before us, we put out on the back trail.

"Hold hard, friend!" said my comrade, as the fresh young filly I rode stretched out in a slashing gallop. "If 'twur only twenty mile of good pariera from this to Van Noy Ferry that we've got to make to save our skins, we'd throw out yon varmints right smart; but reck'lect this pariera gives out in six mile more, and we've as many nule over bad mountain range afore we git down to the open agin, that'll give these fine breeders goss!"

With horses well in hand, we had ridden some little distance, when a loud whoop in our rear proclaimed that the Indians had reached our camp, but whether the demonstration proceeded from disappointment at the destruction of their

anticipated prize, or rejoicing at the capture of our companion, the failing light did not permit us to judge. Soon we heard them again in pursuit. Darkness now set rapidly in, but riding as usual in Indian file, our horses accustomed for several weeks to follow the trail, picked it out with the greatest ease. As we came to the end of the prairie, I was delighted to see a full moon rising over the mountains, so that we should now have light to guide us in our flight—a great chance in our favour. Kit had relapsed into his accustomed taciturnity, and beyond paying great attention to the sounds in the rear, by which he seemed to regulate our pace, he betrayed no interest in anything. Knowing that all depended on our horses holding out, as we clattered up the first long mountain slope I ranged alongside of him, and examined their conditions. My own filly, though pretty heavily weighted, was as yet perfectly fresh, her stride was easy and elastic, and I felt she was warming well to her work. But an unpleasant sensation came over me, as I noticed that Kit's chesnut was already bathed in a profuse sweat.

Now that we were fairly in the mountains, our real troubles began. Three days since we had crossed this range, and having shortly before made the passage of the great Cañon Creek, a terrific pass, the trail had not appeared more dangerous than usual. But then we had leisure and daylight to aid us; now, the white metallic light of the moon, which brought out in startling distinctness each crag and rocky point it fell upon, left many dangerous bits of our path in deep obscurity, yet we were compelled to pass over them in full career, for our pursuers now began to push us to their utmost. At intervals, above the clatter of our horses' iron-shod hoofs, the mountains behind us echoed with their whoops, and were replied to from the heights around by the peculiar cry of the white owl, proceeding, as we were aware, from red sentinels, who were able to observe each turn of the chase, and thus urged their comrades still to follow. Urged by their wild riders to the top of their speed, the hardy unshod little mustangs of our enemies scrambled after us over the dangerous trail with a cat-like facility of foothold not possessed by our own cattle. To add to our embarrassments, our third horse now began to show a desire to stray from the trail, and forced us often to lose ground by swerving to head him back again. In fact, it was all we could do to hold our own, and, desperately as our desperate need required it, we pushed on. The steep mountain-side, the other day painfully ascended, was now dashed furiously down; the edge of the precipice, usually traversed so gingerly, was spurred fiercely over, unheeding the appeals of our terrified horses, who quivered and snorted in very fear. Without drawing bridle, we spattered through the mountain-torrent that ran down the deep gulches, and took flying the smaller streams. When the last weary mountain-crest was topped, and we descended again to the wooded plain beneath, I should have felt myself comparatively safe had

it not been for the deplorable condition of our horses. As Kit had foreseen, the mountain-range had fearfully tried them. Though my mare, with the instinct of good blood, still answered when I made a call on her, I felt she was getting fast used up; but the chesnut was in a still worse plight: his drooping crest and labouring stride told the extremity of his distress. We had just arrived at the ford of State Creek, a small arm of Rogue River, when Kit's chesnut suddenly staggered, and then plunged headlong to the ground. "Four white legs and a white nose, cut his throat and throw him to the crows!" exclaimed his rider, bitterly repeating the old saw as he vainly endeavoured to raise him. Meanwhile, I had ridden forward and caught the loose horse. Kit mounted him in silence, and together we entered the ford, but just before we reached the opposite bank he dismounted, and standing knee-deep in the water, put his rein into my hand.

"Mate," he said, "we're bound to part comp'ny, if we don't want to go under; take both animals and make tracks for Van Noy: this coon 'll look out for hisself, somehow. Good-by t'ye!" And he set off wading down the creek.

I brought my horses to his side in a moment.

"No, no, Kit," I said, deeply touched by his generous proposition; "fight or fly, whichever it is, we'll keep together."

"Don't rile me, young fellar," he replied, in a voice that he vainly endeavoured to render harsh, and abandoned for a tone of earnest entreaty. "I tell 'ee we must part now—it can't be fixed no ways different. That thur light animal 'ud burst up under my weight long afore we made Rogue River, and yourn ain't got two mile run left in him; he ain't. Now, look h'yar, if yew want to save our skins, take both them animals, it'll throw the Injuns off my trail, and ride hard for Van Noy. Rouse up the boys thar, and tell 'em Kit Butler from Boonville's cached in the timber by State Crick, and the red-skins are out. Guess they'll be round with their shooting-irons, and bring me in right away. Hurrah now, boy!"

A moment's reflection convinced me that Kit's plan was the only one that could possibly save us, but it was with a bitterness of heart such as I had never felt before, that I shook his loyal hand—I could not speak—in token that I bade him farewell. If I acted wrongly in abandoning him, God knows that my own reflections as I put out on my lonely trail, were almost punishment enough.

But, in reality, Kit's chances of escape were not far from being as good as my own. The plain, especially by the creek, was well wooded, so that our separation took place entirely without the knowledge of the Indians, who, though they would certainly find the foundered chesnut, would naturally conclude that its rider was away on the fresh horse. Neither would they gain any information from the hunter's tracks, for, of course, he had taken the precaution to wade some distance down the creek before he

cached in the timber, and water leaves no trail. But I could not reason on all this then. I could only remember that I had left the last and best of all my comrades behind me, and that if evil came to him, I should be held accountable. Deeply plunged in such maddening reflections, I had not ridden far, when the report of a rifle in my rear almost caused my heart to stand still.

The Indians, then, had discovered Kit's cache. I pulled up my horses and turned round with the desperate determination of rejoining him at any hazard, when all at once I remembered, in impotent despair, that, with the exception of my bowie-knife, I was unarmed. On parting, Kit had taken possession of my rifle and revolver, remarking that, while they might be of use to him, I should ride lighter without them. All a pretext! I saw it now, when too late. The noble-minded fellow had guessed that if I heard him engaged with the Indians, I should return, and had thus taken measures effectually to prevent me. Utterly distraught on making this discovery, I remember little more of my ride to Van Noy Ferry. Though I rode like a madman, I must yet have acted with the soundest discretion. My horse was afterwards found dead about two miles up Applegate Creek, by which the trail ran after leaving State Creek. At that point I must have mounted the second horse, and swam the creek, instead of following it up to Rogue River. Then I crossed the country in a north-easterly direction, and thus, by cutting off an angle, considerably shortened the distance. But of all this, I only distinctly remember pricking along my failing horse with my bowie-knife, as the lights of the ferry came into view, till he also gave in and fell, throwing me over his head and inflicting on me no trifling injuries; and that wet, bruised, and bleeding, but still with the one fixed, irrevocable idea pervading my weakened senses, that Kit was in deadly peril for my sake, and that he must be saved, I burst into the midst of the ferry men as they sat round their fire in their log hut.

"Kit Butler, from Boonsville!" shouted one of the rough backwoodsmen, the captain of the ferry, in reply to my wild appeal for help. "By thunder! he's jest my fust cousin; how kim yew to quit, mister, when he war in sich a tar-nation fix, eh?"

"Talking won't get him out of it, man," I replied, impatiently; "either come along with me at once to help him, or give me a rifle and fresh horses and let me do what I can myself."

"We'll go—don't you fear, mister," he said, more graciously; "yon darned red-skins ain't goin' to wipe out the smartest mountain boy in all Oregon. And no 'muss' round! Hy'ar yew—Pete—Dave—Zack—lay hold of your shootin'-irons, boys, and git the animals out of the corral."

"Ay, ay, Cap!" was the ready response; and with astonishing quickness we were all

armed and mounted on sturdy mustangs, riding hard to the rescue.

As we splashed through Applegate Creek Ford, we heard a shot to the front, followed shortly by another. "Hurrah, boys!" shouted our leader; "thar goes old Kit! He ain't wiped out jest yet, nohow. Guess it'll take a caution o' red-skins to whip him. He'll make 'em see snakes and black ones at that."

In a few minutes more we debouched on to the north bank of State Creek, but not an Indian was visible. The noise of our approach had effectually scared them; they had not cared to stand the brunt of a charge of half a dozen white men. As we swept up the creek, dear old Kit stepped out of his cover, his hands and face black with powder, and his forehead bleeding, but only from the splinter of a bad cap.

"You're welkim, boy," he said, as we shook hands; "twar getting hot, though I peppered one or two of the varmints. They got on my trail right smart when yew quit; but they ain't got me this time, I reckon."

Prudence forbade our small party from attempting the mountain-passes that night to learn the fate of our comrades, but early the next day we reached Deer Creek.

As we had anticipated, we found the two Germans dead in the creek, where the fatal ambush had been laid for them. Of the artist we could find no traces, but on our return to the ferry we found him there. Though unhurt, his plight was ludicrously doleful. The Indians had discovered him in the cedar, and it would have fared ill with him but that the sketch of the young Indian was found on his person, drawn so accurately that all his captors recognised it. Believing from this circumstance that he was a great "medicine" man whom it would be dangerous to injure, they stripped and released him.

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